



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>

Star dust from the dugouts

William Le Roy
Stidger

H807.719.5



Harvard College Library

FROM

Francis R. Stoddard

.....

.....

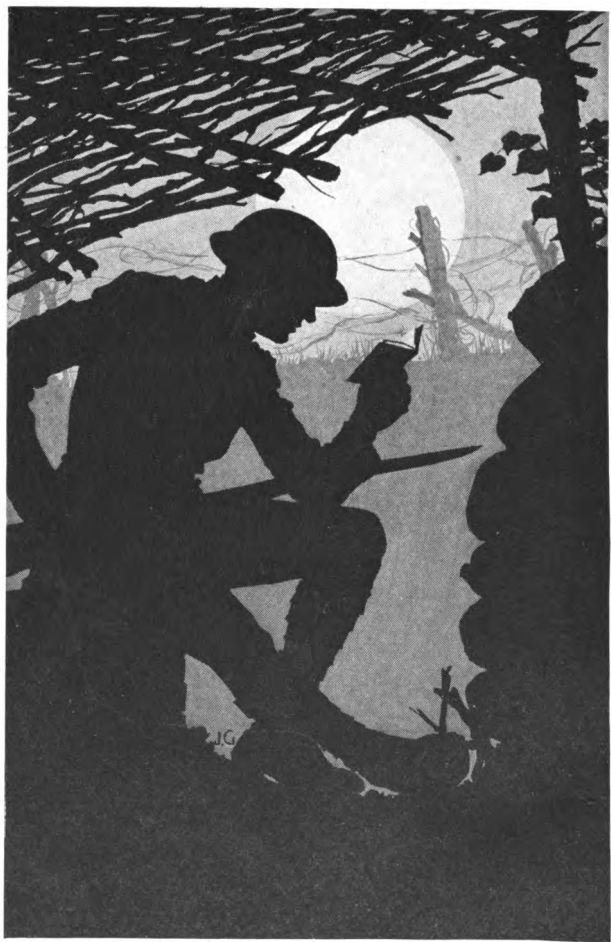
.....

Col. Francis R. Stoddard

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

GIANT HOURS WITH POET PREACHERS

12mo. NET, \$1.00



"I've read it by moonlight"

0

STAR DUST FROM THE DUGOUTS

A RECONSTRUCTION BOOK

BY
WILLIAM L. STIDGER

INTRODUCTION BY
PETER CLARK MACFARLANE

ILLUSTRATED BY
JESSIE GILLESPIE



THE ABINGDON PRESS
NEW YORK CINCINNATI

H807.719.5



Francis R. Stoddard

Copyright, 1919, by
WILLIAM L. STIDGER

To
MY TWO GIRLS
IVA AND BETTY

CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
INTRODUCTION	11
FOREWORD	13
I. WHAT IS COMING OUT OF IT?—The Soldier and a Sermon.....	23
II. THE DOMINIE "DOWN THE LINE"—The Soldier—His Attitude toward the Chaplain.....	45
III. THE MORNING WATCH—The Soldier—His Attitude toward Prayer.....	74
IV. "WHEN A MAN'S ALONE"—The Soldier—What He Prayed.....	90
V. THE ANGELUS IN WAR TIME—The Soldier—When He Prayed.....	106
VI. THE BREWERY GANG—The Soldier—His Attitude toward the Preacher Who Served.....	128
VII. THE BIG BROTHER OF THE KHAKI—The Soldier—His Attitude toward the Y. M. C. A.....	144
VIII. THE BOOK AND THE BOY—The Soldier—His Attitude toward the Bible.....	161
IX. "I'M FOR HIM!"—The Soldier—His Attitude toward the Christ.....	177
X. THE NEW CALVARY—The Soldier—His Attitude toward the Cross.....	187
XI. THE UNION SACRED—The Soldier—His Attitude toward Church Unity.....	209
XII. LINKING THE BOY UP WITH THE CHURCH.....	223

ILLUSTRATIONS

"I've read it by moonlight".....	<i>Frontispiece</i>
	PAGE
The soldier in France was a good listener.....	23
"We lifted the stretcher with the colonel in it to the top of the parapet".....	45
"Another minute and my boys would be going over" ..	74
"And grant me grace through the fleeting hours to be A MAN—and unashamed".....	90
"You two—you two—are all I have—".....	106
"You'll have known what it is to do hard physical labor for somebody else".....	128
"I am going to town, Doc. . . . But I'm only going to get my pants pressed".....	144
"You bet your life they read it".....	161
"I knew you'd come, Tom!".....	177
"On a tree such as this Jesus was crucified".....	187
"This is no time for formalities".....	209
Every mother's son of them will want to talk over their experiences.....	224

INTRODUCTION

THE author of this book is himself a speck of Star Dust. He is a big, husky fellow with a big heart. His warm, impulsive nature sent him to France, leaving a wife and baby behind him. There that same nature sent him into the line of duty at the far front. He drove a truck that carried "Y" supplies to the farthermost ditch. Night after night he took his load out through the darkness over the shell-torn roads and through the hail of shells themselves. He was sometimes frightened, he was frequently in danger, but he always delivered the load. Between whiles he helped to bring in the wounded and did a Christian shepherd's duty in the hospitals. There were strains, excitements, tragedies. But the whole big business of war, the vast enginery of battle, never distracted this lovable man a moment from his supreme interest in what was interesting the khaki cogs in this great machine. He saw them not as cogs but as men, and he saw into them. I used to think the deepest thing I saw in France was

STAR DUST FROM THE DUGOUTS

mud, but Stidger was always seeing the deeps in hearts. He has touched this war with his human hands; he has measured the current of its emotions through his heart, and some of that touch, of that measure, is here in the book, told with a simple sincerity that is power.

PETER CLARK MACFARLANE.

FOREWORD

THIS is a reconstruction book. It is not intended to be a storybook, although great human emotions, soul crises, and triumphant spiritual victories must necessarily be illustrated with human-interest experiences. It is intended for a particular audience.

This particular audience is the preacher and the church worker, together with the parents in the American home who wish to understand the kind of men who are coming back to them from France; those folks who have a tremendous desire to do the highest and best thing for the soldier.

The spiritual world in America—and that includes the home, the school, and the church—has facing it and clamoring for attention the supreme opportunity of all the ages. It is an opportunity made to hand. It is the opportunity of two million boys who have been in France and who have had either a conscious or an unconscious change of heart because of all the eventful things that have

STAR DUST FROM THE DUGOUTS

happened in their lives during the past two years; a change of heart in relation to several of the most vital things of life and eternity; a change of heart toward religion, the Bible, the church, the minister who represents the church, God the Father, and the Christ.

One tries to catch a figure of speech that will burn the thing that he is trying to say into the hearts of those who are responsible for the spiritual welfare of the world. One thinks of the trite figure of the "fields ripe unto the harvest," but that is a hackneyed figure, and it is not strong enough. He wants something that will shake the world awake to the consciousness of the fact which even this trite figure partly expresses. Then one turns to the figure of heated white metal—white with new experiences, white with great resolves, white with new ideals; white with the heat of a new passion for democracy and brotherhood, ready to be molded. But he dismisses *that* figure, for it does not seem to one who has come to know the boys "over there" that they are going to be molded. They are, rather, going to mold! They are the

FOREWORD

leaven that will leaven the life of America during the next fifty years.

Therefore since they are not going to be molded, but are going to mold, pray God that the church of America will have the "high look" in its eyes; pray God that when these boys step into the churches, their souls on fire with a high, deep, broad and abiding faith, there may be no cold, narrow, prejudiced atmosphere to dampen their passion or drive them away from its altars to do their work and live their lives elsewhere.

So one is forced to the figure which suggests the title of this book, "Star Dust from the Dugouts."

It is borrowed from Sam Walter Foss, he who wrote "The House by the Side of the Road." Somehow this great, virile man's poet expresses the very thing that one wants to say in a reconstruction book: that there is an army of men coming back from France: American men; men, with possibilities in their souls of becoming the "Large Heroic Fellows Yet to Be"; an army of men, coming back and to come back, who are verily the "Star Dust" out of which the stars of the future are to be made.

STAR DUST FROM THE DUGOUTS

“There are large, heroic fellows
 Making music hereabouts
And large, heroic men are yet to be;
And long shall be the long, long years
 Before the breed runs out;
Strong as iron in the mountains,
Clean as saltness in the sea!

“There was workmanship put in it
 And the world was made to last;
And it wears as well to-day as hitherto;
And the large heroic fellows
That it made there in the past
It shall match them and o’er top them with the
 new.

“From the star dust of wide spaces
 Did the mighty worlds cohere
And there’s star dust for a million worlds to be;
 There are many things that happen in the long
 platonic year.
There are new stars, yet unmolded, that the com-
 ing days will see.

“The cosmic stuff of men and stars the years will
 not debase,
And greater stars than throng the skies shall newly
 loom in space;

FOREWORD

And greater men than e'er have been shall yet redeem the race;

There are large, heroic fellows yet to be!"

These are "the large, heroic fellows yet to be"; these are the men with the dreams; these are the men who "Will yet redeem the race" if we, the church, we, the preachers, we, the men and women of the homes of America, do not, with our bickerings and our quarrels, our little dreams and our little souls, our interpretation of the gospel of Christ as a selfish saving of our own souls, to the exclusion of its power to redeem social and industrial life, dampen the passion of their dreams as they step into our homes and our churches.

One evening in our prayer meeting, since I have returned from France, I was speaking on the "high look" in the eyes of the boys—that "high look" of which Poet Oxenham speaks. A young and yet very thoughtful girl, whose brother is "over there," arose in the meeting and said, "The thing that I am worrying about is not whether the 'high look' will be in the eyes of our boys who are in

STAR DUST FROM THE DUGOUTS

France, but whether we, the churches, we, the wives, we, the sisters, we, the mothers, we, the fathers, we, the sweethearts, will have the 'high look' in our own eyes to meet the 'high look' in their eyes when they come home."

One finds this thought expressed everywhere by writers who are now returned from France; men and women who have carefully, thoughtfully and sympathetically studied this boy of ours over there all during the war. One has hardly been able to pick up a secular magazine during the past year that he has not found such titles as "What Our Boys Will Be Like When They Come Home," and always the words that follow have been spiritual words and spiritual prophecies. That is a singularly striking thing to find in our secular magazines, but it is there.

Perhaps the whole matter is summed up by Mrs. Grace Richmond in a recent number of *The Ladies' Home Journal*, in a verse which expresses a challenge to the American heart to have the "high look" worthy to meet the "high look" in the eyes of our boys who are coming back home.

FOREWORD

WHEN OUR BOYS COME BACK

“Somehow they’ll all be different—

O God, we know it well!

They’re not the same who went away

To fight the fires of hell.

Their boyish eyes—now eyes of men—

Will look us through and through,

To see if what has come to us

Has made us different too.

“O, they will have new standards then,

These changed, new boys of ours,

And by them they will measure us,

With all their strange, new powers;

They’ll find if we are petty still,

And narrow, and unfair,

And in that searching gaze of theirs

We’ll feel our souls laid bare.

“Against that Day of Judgment Days

We must make ready fast,

Lest they shall be ashamed of us

When they come home at last;

For we should drink of sorrow,

Yes, the very deepest cup,

If in that Day, in their clear eyes,

We could not measure up!”

STAR DUST FROM THE DUGOUTS

Out of the boy in France the future of the nations is to be made. He is the force with which the future of the church must reckon. No narrow selfish interpretation of the gospel of Christ will make any appeal to him.

The author of this book desires to thank The Outlook for permission to use "The Morning Watch"; The Independent for permission to use "The Dominie Down The Line," "The Brewery Gang," and "The Angelus"; The Christian Advocate for permission to use the sermon included in the first chapter of this book.

He further wishes to acknowledge the permission to quote from John Oxenham, which has been granted by The George H. Doran Company, of New York; publishers of The Fiery Cross, The Vision Splendid, and All's Well; from Private Peat, which is granted by The American Magazine; from Coningsby Dawson, which is granted by the publisher of Carry On, The John Lane Company of New York; the beautiful poem in the introduction by Grace Richmond which appeared first in The Ladies' Home Journal.

FOREWORD

He also desires to express appreciation for permission to use that portion of the chapter on the Y. M. C. A. which first appeared in The Epworth Herald, and that portion of the chapter on "The New Calvary" which was printed by The Methodist Review.

*The soldier in France
was a good listener*



CHAPTER I

WHAT IS COMING OUT OF IT?

THE SOLDIER AND A SERMON

THE soldier in France was a good listener. He seemed hungry for anything that had the slightest suggestion of spiritual value in it. He usually wanted what he called a real "honest-to-God sermon." If he went to a religious service and did not get a sermon, he was disappointed. "Let's stick to the religious stuff," is a phrase that Dean Birney, of the Boston Theological School, brings back to us, and that phrase expresses the common and yet the

STAR DUST FROM THE DUGOUTS

uncommon experience of all of us who attempted to preach to the boys. They preferred straight preaching. They didn't want silly, sentimental talk about their souls. They wanted man-to-man talk about Christ, and decent living, and home, and brotherhood, and justice, and God—the things for which they were fighting.

One great preacher, who had been misled in Paris through wrong advice, got the idea that religion was taboo on all days except Sunday, and therefore he gave a secular lecture. He soon found out that he had been misled when a boy said to one of the Y. M. C. A. secretaries: "Gosh! I went to hear that preacher because I had known of him at home, and I had a right to hear something about religion, but he gave us a lecture. I wanted to hear him preach. Certainly, if we needed good, old-fashioned preaching at home, we need it a darned sight more here!"

I include in this book, as its first chapter, a sermon. It is the humble effort of a humble Methodist minister who went to France to serve rather than to preach. But out of his

WHAT IS COMING OUT OF IT?

serving he found this sermon and then when he was called upon to do so he preached it to the boys. He had only one sermon. He took a good many with him but tore them up. This one he found in the trenches and trucks, troubles and temptations of the front line. He gives it, not because of any special merit in it, but more because of the lack of any distinctive claim to its being a great sermon. It may serve to show the attitude of the soldier in France toward a rather ordinary, average sermon.

A SERMON TO AMERICAN SOLDIERS OVERSEAS

You men who are fighting this war in France have a right to ask whether or not God caused the war; and if he did not cause the war, you have a right to ask what he is going to do about it, now that man has caused it. I am going to try to answer those questions for you this night.

Some time before we get through I am going to give you the text of my sermon. I may give it to you in the middle of the sermon and

STAR DUST FROM THE DUGOUTS

I may wait until the end. In either case it will stay longer with you for my not having started off with it. But there is one thing that I want to warn you of at the beginning, and that is that I do not share the opinion of some folks that you do not want to hear a straight, honest-to-goodness, regular man-to-man sermon, just like you used to want back home, with a man's Christ in it; a man's Christ, who is a man's Friend wherever he is, at home or across the seas; Lincoln's Christ, Cromwell's Christ, General Foch's Christ, General Pershing's Christ. I am going to talk about him before I am through; and since I know that you fellows are the same lads that you were back home I am proud to bring to you the Christ of your boyhood, the Christ of your mother's love and your mother's prayers, and just now the Christ of your mother's loneliness.

Was This War God's Fault? Was this war God's fault? Thomas Tiplady answers that question with a beautiful figure that you will never forget. Tiplady is up there now, somewhere in the Somme battle line, with his Tom-

WHAT IS COMING OUT OF IT?

mies. He is a Methodist chaplain, and he has been in it all for three years.

It was evening. The chaplain had been down in a communication trench with some of the boys holding a little communion service. They were returning home about sunset. Suddenly over their heads a big Jack Johnson whined its hating way, and burst not far from them on their front. It was a dirty black cloud of smoke that it sent into the evening sky.

To Chaplain Tiplady this was symbolic of the war. War is dirty. War is full of hate and littleness and pettiness and hurt and harm and pain and cruelty and dearth and death. We are men here in this hut and we are not afraid to speak the truth, and we know that that is the truth. War is mud and cold, and snow, and rain, and pneumonia, and wounds. Nobody can tell us that it isn't, for we have been there and we know. That black cloud well symbolized war.

God did not make that black cloud. Man made it. Man's selfish ambitions; his greed; the Kaiser's desire to rule the world; the

STAR DUST FROM THE DUGOUTS

Kaiser's inordinate, ridiculous, insane egotism made the war. God had nothing to do with it. Man made it. Man set it there.

But God does have something to do with what is daily coming out of the war.

As the chaplain and his group of boys watched that cloud, suddenly the red sun, which was blood red, a war sun, slowly turned that unfolding black cloud which man had made, into a beautiful pink. As the winds of evening blew, that cloud of smoke unfolded in the shape of a great Rose and then turned from pink to a deep red under the war sun. Man had made that black cloud, but God turned it into a beautiful rose.

Man makes war. God has nothing to do with it, but he is going to turn the war into something great, something high and heroic.

We are going now to see what God is making out of this war.

When I came to France I came "to speak in the camps." But when I got here I asked to be sent to the front lines to work. I didn't feel qualified to speak to you fellows who are bearing the brunt of the battle until I had

WHAT IS COMING OUT OF IT?

lived with you in the trenches. I spent six weeks driving a truck down on the Toul line with our American boys, and out of that experience I speak.

I brought some carefully written sermons over with me on the boat to preach to you, but I tore them up down there on the front lines one evening, and I said to myself, "If I ever speak to the boys it will be out of the white fire of my own experience here in France." I come to you in that spirit to-night.

Lesson the First: Respect for the Things Back Home. First, out of this war God is teaching us a new respect for the things and the folks back home.

I read in the Stars and Stripes a few weeks ago the confession of a soldier who said: "Well, I've got more respect for my wife than I ever had before in all my life. How in the world a woman will live a lifetime with a man and wash dishes three times a day without rebelling I don't know. I never knew what a slave's task washing dishes was until I got to France and had to wash my own mess kit."

That is a humorous expression of something

STAR DUST FROM THE DUGOUTS

that you fellows feel every day of your lives as you take the westward, homeward look. You are beginning to see that those folks back home are about the finest people in this old world. You are beginning to see that little things which you thought were disagreeable in them have all disappeared and only the lovable things, only the heroic things, only the sweetest things stand out in your memories.

Out of this experience you are beginning to have a new respect for the social customs, for the sanitary laws, for the ways of your nation and your home. You are beginning to know that, after all, the good old United States of America has some laws of sanitation that you had not noticed until you came to France and slept in a French barn above a manure pile. You are beginning to love as never before your America: its green hills, its white peaks, its crystal rivers, its blooming orchards, its white sea sands; its folks, its ways, its homes.

Lesson the Second: A Great New World Brotherhood. You fellows have found out that there are other fine men in the world in addi-

WHAT IS COMING OUT OF IT?

tion to Americans. You have learned to respect the Tommy and the French soldier. You have seen him fight. You have known that he has no such thing as cowardice in his make-up. You have come to find out that the English Tommy is one of the finest fellows on earth. Some of you young officers trained with him up there on the British front, and you came back with a wholesome respect for him and he for you.

One night I was in a Young's Men's Christian Association hut. There was an English Tommy there in Young Men's Christian Association uniform. He had been invalided from the English army, after having been in it for three years. He was gassed in the early part of the war, when they didn't know much about gas and only had those rag respirators. He couldn't keep out of it, so he came to the Young Men's Christian Association. I slept with him that night down at General Pershing's headquarters at Chaumont. He was only twenty-eight years of age, but, as he said to me before we slept, "Yank, I'm an old man, and I have a wife and three babies." And

STAR DUST FROM THE DUGOUTS

he was an old man—an old man because the gas had gotten him. He coughed all night long. I think there was not a minute when he was not coughing. I thought he would tear his lungs out the way he coughed. My heart ached for him. It was terrifically cold there in that room, for it was February and a blizzard was blowing outside. I went to sleep, aching for that fine lad. In the middle of the night I awoke, shivering with the cold and with his cough rasping my ears and my heart. I carelessly said: "I never was so cold, Tommy. I never knew in my life before that a fellow can shiver inside as well as outside." He laughed between his coughs and we went to sleep again. I woke about three o'clock in the morning and felt much warmer. I wondered why that was when the English lad's coughing started again. Then I discovered that that rascal had gotten up in the night and had thrown two of his meager blankets over me. I got up and put them back and said, "You're crazy, man! You, a sick man, coughing your lungs out, and still you would get up in the cold night and put

WHAT IS COMING OUT OF IT?

your blankets over me. I'll beat you if you do that again!"

"Yes, Yank, but I'm used to the cold and you're not."

Yes, the more that we see of this British Tommy the more we respect him. This great new brotherhood is coming out of the great war.

And there is a new brotherhood with the French. At first you did not understand him. Of course you knew that a million of the finest young men of France had paid the last penalty, had made the great sacrifice. You knew of the Marne and you knew of Verdun, but it took seeing them in real action to clinch that brotherhood. You fellows remember the night that you went into the trenches to take their place down at Toul. You remember in the darkness, where you dared not speak, the pressures of French hand clasps, and, sometimes, much to your embarrassment, those twin kisses that you got on both cheeks.

Then one day you saw these same French soldiers drilling. You had thought up to that time that you were pretty well trained your-

STAR DUST FROM THE DUGOUTS

self, but you had the experience that a young soldier friend of mine had when he saw a French regiment drilling for the first time. He said: "I used to think that I was some soldier, but after seeing them guys I'm nothing but a Kansas farmer after this." You have come to respect these men.

You remember that day down on the Toul line, when you were having your first hard scrap with the Boche, that day when Archie Roosevelt was wounded. When you runners came back to report to headquarters you know what they saw back there in the grass, for those same runners told you when they returned to the trenches, and the report of what they had seen flashed down along your line like an electric wave, and it sent a thrill of brotherhood through you. That runner told you that a whole regiment of Frenchmen were back there in the grass, lying on their bellies, their shrewd, well-trained war eyes peering out over you. If you needed them, they were there. That was all. Those experienced fighters were there to back you up. Thank God you didn't need them. You

WHAT IS COMING OUT OF IT?

fought that scrap through to a finish, and I saw you do it; and you licked the Boche at his own game. You didn't need those waiting, watching Frenchmen, but the fact that they were there, that they lay there all day, backing you up, was the thing that thrilled you that day and thrills you now as you think of it. And those Frenchmen were just as proud as you were over your victory. The officers sent communications saying so to your officers. Since that day you have had a new love, a new comradeship for the French. You have heard that word "Comrade" on the French soldier's lips everywhere since you came over, and now it is beginning to mean much to you. That is one of the finest things that is coming out of this war, for God's laws are shaping a new world brotherhood.

Lesson the Third: A Great New Respect for Your Officers and for Yourself. You have become men overnight, some of you who have been down there in the trenches, for I have seen you. One lives a year in a month in this war; a month in a week; a week in a day; a day in an hour; an hour in a minute, and

STAR DUST FROM THE DUGOUTS

sometimes an eternity in a second. And so overnight you lads have become men. You are learning a new respect for yourselves as you conquer in this war; as you conquer yourselves; as you conquer temptations, with which France is full; as you conquer fear. That is a tremendous thing that God is bringing out of this war for you.

You are learning to love and serve and respect each other. I picked a boy up in my truck down on the front lines a while ago. I was going down front myself with a load of provisions for our front-line hut. I said to the boy, "When do you have to get back to the trenches? Is there any special time?"

He replied: "Not until seven o'clock, but if I get there a little earlier the other guy can get out a little quicker."

You are learning to think of the other fellow. You know how long that last hour is in the trenches, waiting for relief. Yes, you are beginning to have more respect for each other. And that is not confined to enlisted men. You have more respect for your officers.

WHAT IS COMING OUT OF IT?

Down in the trenches one day there was a terrific scrap. Two of our Young Men's Christian Association secretaries were in the trenches when it began. They were sent back by the captain. They went through the communication trenches through the woods back toward the village. When they got to the edge of the woods they found two stretcher bearers with a wounded German, all done out. The stretcher bearers were going to leave the prisoner there. The secretaries said that they would help carry him. They all started, taking turns as they walked along the trench with backs bent. Then, midway in the field through which the communication trench ran they came to a place where the German shells had caved the trench in. They had a discussion as to what to do and decided to carry the prisoner out on the parapet. "The Germans won't fire on us when they see us carrying a wounded man above our heads," they agreed. But they had hardly gotten started when a terrific barrage of German shells fell around them. They dropped their wounded prisoner and ran. One Young Men's Christian Asso-

STAR DUST FROM THE DUGOUTS

ciation secretary was an old man, but he says that when he got his second wind he beat the stretcher bearers across the field. They reported to headquarters. The major in charge asked, "But where is your prisoner?"

"He's out there on the parapet, sir, where we dropped him."

The major turned to these men and said something that ought to go down in history: "Well, he may only be a Boche, men, but we're Americans, and he'll have to be brought in if I go for him myself."

So out the secretaries went again under that shell fire. They were an hour getting him, but at last they brought that wounded German to safety. When you hear your American officers talking like that a new respect wells in your heart for them.

Then there was that funeral scene at the evacuation hospital at Sebastapol. Our secretaries had had the detail of digging the five graves that morning. The first American private was buried and the military salute fired over his grave; then "taps." Then the second American private, with the military salute and

WHAT IS COMING OUT OF IT?

taps. Then the third. Then a captain, with the military salute and taps. Then came the Hun boy. His grave was dug beside that of the American captain. The sergeant in charge of the firing squad seemed uncertain as to what to do about giving the Hun military honors. He looked at his officer chaplain and said, "Shall we fire a salute for the Hun, sir?"

I shall never cease to feel proud of that chaplain's answer. He made it short, but he said something. He said: "Men, we are not fighting this poor boy. We are fighting the German nation and the military powers. This is just some German mother's boy. Yes, fire a salute over the Boche."

The salute was fired and taps blown for the Boche boy, and I know that firing squad of American lads went away, as I did, with a new respect for their officers.

And out of this war there is coming a new respect for yourselves, for your officers, and that, too, is a tremendously wonderful thing that God is doing.

Finally, Out of This War There Is to Come in Your Hearts a New Respect for, and Under-

STAR DUST FROM THE DUGOUTS

standing of, the Christ Man. You are learning that Christ died on Calvary for the same things that you are fighting for: liberty, brotherhood in the world, the principle that all men are created equal, the inviolability of personality and the destruction of that empire which would enslave the whole world.

You are seeing that Jesus the Christ Man had much in common with your experiences. Gethsemane was the trench of Christ's life; Calvary was "over the top." When he conquered his fear, his natural human fear, his dread of pain and death, and faced Calvary, because he knew that that was the thing to do, he went "over the top."

A boy down front talked in this way to me one day as we sat in a Young Men's Christian Association hut. He said: "Sir, I've been a-readin' this story of the garden. It seems to me, if I read it right, that this here Guy Christ" (I winced at his way of putting it, fellows, but his sincerity made me calm again), "he didn't want to go 'over the top.' He was a bit afraid of it, just like us, and just like the Tommies and all of 'em. They admit it.

WHAT IS COMING OUT OF IT?

They are afraid, but they go anyhow. They hate it, but when the time comes and the whistle blows, over they go to a man, forgetting their fear."

And, fellows, that lad was right. I've read a good many books and I've talked to a good many men—English, French, and Americans—who have gone "over the top," from the Marne to Gallipoli; from Jerusalem to the Somme; from Verdun to the big drive, and I never yet have met a man who wasn't big enough to admit that he was afraid when he knew that in a few minutes he was to go over. But the man who is afraid and who conquers fear, has won one of the greatest battles in war. Then the boy continued:

"Yes, this Christ Man was a bit afraid, as I see it. He even went so far, as I read it, as to say, 'If it's just as good with you, let me out of it, Father,' or words that meant the same—I ain't quotin' them exactly, I know. Then suddenly he seemed to realize that it was orders from back of the lines; orders from a Great Commander back of the lines somewhere who knew more about it all than he

STAR DUST FROM THE DUGOUTS

did; a Commander who had a bigger view of the battle than he did. Suddenly he seemed to realize that orders was orders, and he said: 'It's all right now. Let's go!' or as that Book puts it, 'Nevertheless, not my will, but thine be done'—and over he went!"

Yes, men, the lad was right. He had figured it all out. He had read that story of Gethsemane and Calvary. He had seen that Jesus Christ had about the same human fears of death and pain as you boys have. Somehow Christ seems more of a soldier's Christ than ever before when we understand that story. Somehow he seems more your Christ than anybody's else in all this world. Somehow he seems to have come just for you and just for these hard days. And down there in the trenches—no wonder they find him there. He has been there before. He was there in the garden. And when he went to Calvary's cross he went "over the top" for humanity. You too will do that, and some of you (for I am talking to some wounded men here, I see) have already done it. Now Christ will mean more to you than ever. He

WHAT IS COMING OUT OF IT?

will be a closer Friend; he will be more precious. You will take him with you now, for he is strangely and silently and surely yours.

Donald Hankey, that Oxford athlete, was not ashamed to pray to this Christ. Before the charge in which he lost his life while leading his men, down there in the trench, he asked them to kneel with him in prayer. They arose and Hankey said: "Over the top! If wounded, 'Blighty'; if killed, the resurrection!"

Yes, out of this war there is coming into your lives a new understanding and a new love for your home folks, for your nation, and there is coming a new respect for and understanding of yourselves, your comrades, your officers; a new world-wide brotherhood and a new understanding of and love for that Christ who is distinctly these days your Comrade and your Friend.

No, God didn't make the war. That question is answered, but he is taking the black cloud of this war and he is turning it into a great unfolding rose of beauty and wonderment.

· STAR DUST FROM THE DUGOUTS

My text? You are waiting for that, lads?
Well, my text is the story of Christ in Geth-
semane. Go home and read it before you
sleep. You will know Christ better then.



CHAPTER II

THE DOMINIE "DOWN THE LINE"

THE SOLDIER—HIS ATTITUDE TOWARD THE CHAPLAIN

ONE gets a little clearer insight into the attitude of the American soldier in France toward religious things, and into the supreme possibilities of his attitude toward religion and the church after the war, by knowing his attitude toward the "Padre," or the "Parson," or the "Doc," or "the Chaplain," or the "Sky Pilot," or the "Dominie," as the preacher is variously called by the boys. We have seen in

STAR DUST FROM THE DUGOUTS

the preceding chapter what his attitude toward a certain type of sermon is. Now we shall see what his attitude is toward the one outstanding representative of the church, the chaplain.

The Senior G. H. Q. chaplain on the staff of General Pershing, Bishop Brent, says among other things:

“The opportunity of the chaplain in the American Expeditionary Forces is unprecedented in military history. The best manhood of America is his to guide, inspire, and mold. It has been a common complaint in parochial life that men do not form a prominent element in the average congregation. No such complaint can be made in the army. Again, our men are in such a temper of mind as to welcome greedily the truth of God from the hearts of true men. They are at the most receptive moment of their lives. They are quick to detect and spurn unreality and sham. They are in search of and responsive to what is real.

“The chaplain comes with two commissions—that of the church, which provides him with power from on high; that from the nation, which indicates his sphere of duty. He is

THE DOMINIE "DOWN THE LINE"

simply a minister of God working in military conditions. He is always and everywhere the spiritual general of the army, and his insignia perpetually proclaims it."

One who has read more than two hundred war books during the last three years tells me that he has yet to find one that "knocks" the "Dominie." On the other hand, he says, "I could fill an entire chapter with pages of genuine tributes to these men of God who 'go about doing good' from the ports of entry out even into No Man's Land in France. From Donald Hankey to Private Peat, thoughtful soldiers have poured out their eloquent tributes to the 'Padre.' "

Of course, it is always the question of the man himself rather than the office. This was true in war as it is always true in peace. It is especially true, however, in war because the littleness and the weakness of the man who is supposed to represent the church and the Christ come out in war as they will never do in peace. If he is a man through and through, he wins everlasting friendship from his men for himself and for his Christ.

STAR DUST FROM THE DUGOUTS

I can best illustrate this by telling the story of old Scotch Dominie Clifford. His story is but typical of hundreds of chaplains. Practically the entire ministerial personnel of the Protestant Church in France enlisted and lived and died with their men. Innumerable stories of the courage and bravery of English and Canadian clergymen who had enlisted as chaplains have come to us. I know of one chaplain, the Rev. Olin Clarke Jones, a Methodist preacher, who so won the admiration of men and officers for his executive ability that he was urged to give up his chaplaincy and go into the war as a "line officer," which he did, afterward going through the St. Mihiel and Argonne battles. He was known by his men as a "line officer," but they came to him as their chaplain just the same.

I know of one Canadian minister who enlisted as a Y. M. C. A. secretary who went to France for six months. When he was six months on the task and his time to go home had come, the captain of the company came to his pup tent, one rainy Sunday morning, and called on him. The captain's visit came as a

THE DOMINIE "DOWN THE LINE"

surprise to the preacher, for the captain had not heretofore seemed to be very friendly to him.

"What's this I hear about your going back home soon?" the captain thundered at him.

"Yes, that is my plan. My church only released me for six months, you know, captain."

"I don't give a d—— how long your church released you for. We need you here. I can see a difference in the discipline, in the morale, and in the whole attitude of these boys since you came with us, and you let that church back in Toronto go—. They don't need you as much as my boys need you!"

It was rough language, but it was sincere language, and the preacher knew it. He sent a cable back to his church. He didn't word it in exactly the language that the captain had adopted, but he did tell his people that he thought that as long as the war lasted he was needed more in France than he was at home. He went into the service as an army chaplain, and was killed six months later on the Somme.

But perhaps of all the stories that I found

STAR DUST FROM THE DUGOUTS

in France the one of Dominie Clifford illustrated more clearly all of the things that I want to show in this chapter: the way a chaplain won out over the prejudice of a crowd of marines until they annexed him as one of their military outfit; the kind of a chaplain that wins and the spirit that wins, which, I take it, is the same spirit that will win for the preacher at home as well as in war.

Dominie Clifford in the battle of Chateau-Thierry had become a hero in the eyes of the marines over night and he didn't know it.

The news swept over Paris like wildfire. The enemy was not far from the great city, and every detail of the battle that was raging only a few miles away was eagerly devoured. Hundreds of French, English, and Americans invalided to Paris surrounded the bulletin boards. Every state document had been taken away from Paris. One conservative French paper which I read said: "Our armies are so close to Paris that there is no longer any room to maneuver. This is the most serious situation we have yet faced in the war." Every truck in Paris was numbered and every

THE DOMINIE "DOWN THE LINE"

plan made for an evacuation if necessary. News had been pouring in to Paris of heroic stands that were being made by the American troops, especially the marines. Men had been mentioned by name. War honors were imminent for many. But of all the stories that came out of his eventful week's fighting that of Dominie Clifford's winning of the Croix du Guerre by dragging his wounded colonel through a stubble wheatfield, for four hundred yards to safety, crawling with shells bursting around him, with the necessity of using a gas mask most of the time, with rifle bullets whining so close that several went through his clothes and a piece of shrapnel into his shoulder, thrilled us most.

I was told to see him and have an interview with him. I went to his hotel and asked if "Dr. Clifford" was there, and just at that minute he stepped into the lobby. It was the Hotel Pavillon.

"Here I am," he said with a grin.

And there he was; a little, gray-haired man about fifty-five years old, with a Scotch twinkle in his eyes and a weary look about his face.

STAR DUST FROM THE DUGOUTS

I learned later that the day he had rescued the colonel two bullets had gone through his cane while he was walking along a camouflaged road attending to his duties. Yet he did not think that this little matter of two bullets going through his cane was worth mentioning to me. I found that out later from a soldier.

He blushed when I told him what I wanted. "Interview me? What for, my boy?"

And the way he asked it made me feel that perhaps, after all, I had made a mistake in the man; that perhaps I had gotten the name wrong; for, to be frank, he didn't look much like a hero to me. And evidently he himself didn't think that he had done anything worth talking about.

"Yes, I was sent here to interview you."

"They must have made a mistake. I haven't done anything," he said with perfect sincerity.

But just then a representative of the Associated Press came up to the desk and said to the clerk: "Is there a man registered here by the name of Clifford? I have been sent to get an interview from him."

THE DOMINIE "DOWN THE LINE"

"There, old fellow. That settles it. We've got you cornered and you can't get out of it," I said to him.

He still seemed confused about it all, but when I said, "Why, we want you to tell us how you dragged your colonel off the field to safety," he consented to have dinner with us.

We had no sooner gotten seated than he started in on his boys, the marines. He had been with them on the front lines for six months. He used to know them back in the West Indies, where he was a missionary, and, in fact, had found one of them right down in his outfit near Verdun whom he had known in the West Indies. He wanted to talk about his boys, but it was a stevedore job to get him to talk about himself. He just naturally and simply and yet with great subtlety evaded that.

"Why, those marines," he said, "they are just naturally the finest fighting men in the world. That boy from the West Indies—I must tell you about him."

Then he went on to tell of about how ten years ago, one evening he was walking down

STAR DUST FROM THE DUGOUTS

the streets of a little town in the West Indies where he was a missionary. He had on white duck clothes. On the way to the post office he bumped into three drunken marines and just as he came up an officer sighted them and was about to arrest them. The good Scotch missionary knew that that would mean a severe punishment, so he said to the officer, "I will take care of these boys." So, with the boys hanging on to him, dirtying his white ducks, he took them to their boat and put them to bed. Then he kept in touch with them, especially with one of them. This fellow was one who needed him badly, for he was a hard drinker.

The boy braced up while he was under the missionaries' care down in the islands, and then he left, and for ten years the good Doctor had not heard of him. Then came Verdun in June, 1918. The Doctor, according to his own story, which he was more eager to tell than how he had dragged the colonel off, was standing behind his canteen one evening when up staggered a marine.

Between hiccoughs, with bleary eyes staring

THE DOMINIE "DOWN THE LINE"

up at the good Doctor, he said, "Hello, ol' fren'! Y' don't know me, do you?"

The Doctor admitted that he didn't remember him.

"So thash way you forget yer ol' frens, ish it?" the drunken marine said, half humorously, but with real affection in his voice.

Then he continued as the Doctor looked mystified, "Shay, don't you r'member that guy you got to shign the pledge back in ol' Wes' Indies ten years ago?"

Then the Doctor remembered, and once again began his patient effort to save the soul of a common marine in whom he saw something worth fighting for even in those perilous days when a man might be in eternity any hour, and in a month's time, under the good Doctor's eye, that marine had won two stripes and bid fair to win another.

And it was this type of experiences that the good Scotch missionary preacher-Y. M. C. A. secretary wanted to talk about rather than his own heroism, in spite of our efforts to drag the story for which we had come out of him.

"Then there was Van," the Doctor said.

STAR DUST FROM THE DUGOUTS

"Day before yesterday at Luzy I met Van. I have been trying to help him quit cigarettes for months, but the poor kid just couldn't do it. I come on him lying in the corner of a fence, wounded seriously. He wanted a cigarette. I knew it wouldn't hurt him, so I lit the first cigarette I've lit in forty years and put it in his mouth. I don't know as I had ought to have done it, but I just naturally couldn't go by and let that kid o' mine hunger for a cigarette while he was waiting for the ambulance. Do you think I did right?"

"It would have been a crime if you hadn't done it," I said to him.

"Put her there, old man; I'm for a preacher guy that can buck up to an emergency like that, even if he doesn't believe in the weed," said the young, impulsive newspaper reporter, reaching his hand across the table with genuine admiration for the old preacher.

"Van looked up," said the Doctor, slowly and with tears in his eyes, "Van looked up at me and said: 'Doc, I know how you hate 'em, and yet you are big enough to light a cigarette for me. God bless you, Doc, and if I ever

THE DOMINIE "DOWN THE LINE"

get well and get my strength I'll quit 'em, so help me God!"

"Do you think he will?" I asked, not knowing the grief I was uncovering.

"No, he never got well. I buried him the next day."

Then the young, impulsive reporter broke in with "What's that verse that you guys preach about? It seems to me it applies to what you did for that kid, Doctor; begging your pardon for quoting it in this reference: 'Insomuch as ye have done it unto the least of one of these,' and then there's something about 'giving a cup of cold water in my name,' isn't there? Well, all I got to say is that being just a common newspaper reporter, and not knowing much about the church, or the Bible, and all that, still I got to hand it to you; you were doing Christian work then when you lit the fag for that dying kid."

"Of course that wasn't all I did," the Doctor said.

"What else did you do?" I asked him.

"I prayed with him. The cigarette opened

STAR DUST FROM THE DUGOUTS

the way. Then I asked him to pray for himself. He spit the cigarette out and prayed. I think he found comfort. He died that afternoon."

Then we tried again tactfully to lead him back to his heroism, but he evaded that part and said, "I must tell you about the trick the boys played on me."

"One afternoon when I was out they stole my coat and my cap and took off all of my Y. M. C. A. buttons and put marine buttons in their place. I knew it was against the rules to wear them, but when I came in I didn't notice it and went to the officers' mess with them on. The colonel calls me 'Padre,' the major calls me 'Chaplain,' and the boys call me 'Doc,' you know," he said, smiling.

"Well, the colonel looked at me funnylike and said, 'Well, Padre, I see you've joined the marines for sure now, and have the buttons and all right with you?'

"I was embarrassed and said, 'I'll go home, sir, and take them off. I didn't know they were on.'"

"Who put them on, Padre?"

THE DOMINIE "DOWN THE LINE"

"The boys, sir."

"Well, if the boys put them on they want them on, so on they stay!" the colonel said to him, with military finality.

Then he told us about the last communion service. "The boys themselves asked for it. They knew the big fight was on the next day, and they asked if we might not have a communion service. I went and got some of that 'Van Rubbish,' as I call it—the French call it Vin Rouge—and, it being the best we could get, we had our communion with it. I told the boys what we were going to do and said that any who did not want to partake of the Lord's Supper could leave. Not a single soldier left.

"I took note of them and nine Catholics partook, thirteen Methodists, three Christian Scientists, nine Baptists, three Lutherans, three Congregationalists, two Episcopalians, one Hebrew, and twenty-three who did not profess any religion. Five of these took a definite stand for the Christ in that meeting. The next day most of them were dead." Then he was subdued for a few minutes, and we

STAR DUST FROM THE DUGOUTS

couldn't get him to talk. He was thinking of those dead boys of his. Then he reached into his pocket and pulled out an envelope, from which he took a bright five-dollar gold piece.

I took it and waited for the story, for the moment forgetting even myself that the old fellow was still evading his own heroic deed.

"The boy that gave me that I saw just before the big fight. I passed him as he went down under the camouflage into a communication trench. He said, 'Doc, have you any cigarettes?'

"I had tried to get him to stop smoking, but couldn't resist the desire to give him a whole package. It might be my last chance to serve him. I pitched him a whole package.

"'Thanks, Doc; you're a good scout.' Then he came back, handed me that five-dollar gold piece and said: 'Doc, take that. If anything happens to me, send it to mother.'"

"Did he get out all right?" I queried, anxiously, for I knew that only a few of the boys who had taken that strategic village had gotten out.

"I am sending the gold piece to his mother

THE DOMINIE "DOWN THE LINE"

this afternoon, along with a letter telling her of his heroic death."

"How did he die?" we both shot at him.

"He died in a strange way. He had been in the thick of it all morning, right down in the front lines, where the shell fire, gas, and rifle bullets poured continuously and machine guns swept the parapets. Then there was an 'over the top' order. He happened to be near his major when they went over. Half way across a field his major was shot down and dropped in an open field wounded. For an hour the boy lay there between his major and the machine-gun fire, protecting the officer with his young body, unscathed. The major, appreciating his service, but knowing that he was bleeding to death, sent the boy back for stretcher bearers."

"Why, the boy will get the medal for that," I said.

"He would have, but he was killed on the way back," came the answer. "It was this way:

"The lad made his way through a barrage back across the field, through the little village. Just as he was skirting the edge of the village

STAR DUST FROM THE DUGOUTS

he heard the whine of a shell. He jumped for a nearby dugout. He made it, but a fragment of the shell struck his cartridge belt and a dozen of his own bullets penetrated his body.

"Yes, he would have gotten a decoration; the major would have seen to that, for he was rescued later, and almost the first thing he asked about was the welfare of the lad who had lain between him and the machine-gun fire, and when we told him what had happened to the lad he sat down and cried."

"But what about your own story?" the reporter asked a bit impatiently, I thought.

The old preacher paid no attention to him, but went on to tell us about an experience he had had in going into the trenches the night before he had dragged the colonel off.

"It's no fun for an American boy to be on patrol duty down close to the lines," he said. "Last night I was there. I went down to say 'hello' to the boys. I was feeling my way along the sides of the communication trenches. It was pitch dark, and misty. Every sound cracked like a gun. Suddenly I heard a 'Halt, who goes there?'"

THE DOMINIE "DOWN THE LINE"

"I replied, 'Friend!' " Then the old Doctor chuckled. "That boy was so relieved to know that it was not a Boche and to recognize my voice that he whispered: 'O, come on, Doc. I'm glad it's you,' instead of making me advance and give the countersign."

The preacher seemed determined not to talk about his own bravery, and I could see that here was a type of man that the reporter had never been up against before, and he was fidgeting in his seat. We had long since finished dessert and he wanted the old man's story. These other things couldn't be put over the cable for a story. Dragging the wounded colonel off was the news story. That was worth a cable. That other stuff in his eyes wasn't big news. I was beginning to think, as the Doctor evidently believed, that, after all, he was giving us the real story; that of how he had gotten into the hearts of those marines, and had served them until they had taken him in turn into their hearts.

"One Catholic boy took a definite stand for Christ in that communion service," the nonchalant Doctor said, jumping back a half

STAR DUST FROM THE DUGOUTS

an hour to a story we thought he had finished.

"He took a stand for Christ, and then came up and told me that he was a Catholic and that he wanted me to go with him to Father Ryan to hear him make his confession. I didn't want to go, but he insisted upon my going. I went, and a more horrible confession of sins I never expect to hear. But he was in dead earnest, and it was a good thing that he got it all off his soul, for he was dead the next day."

Then the dear old modest fellow bowed his head in thought. The strain of the past week had told on him. He looked weary. I wanted to put my arms around his bent shoulders. I thought of my own father being here, down in the front 'line trenches, sleeping out in the fields, as the Doctor told us he had done for weeks, with only a helmet for a pillow. "They make right good pillows," he had said a minute before. I thought of my own father enduring those dangers and hardships at the age of fifty or fifty-five; sleeping out without taking his clothes off for twenty days; the Doctor had told us of that also, and had

THE DOMINIE "DOWN THE LINE"

added with a chuckle, "Then I had to get rid of them, for the cooties had arranged for a convention there." I wanted to reach out and let him lean on me. I thought he would drop off to sleep, but he was only thinking of his marines, so many of whom had "gone west" in the week preceding our interview. The burden of their loss was heavy on his sympathetic soul.

"But, Doctor, won't you *please* tell us about your own stunt, for I have to go in ten minutes."

"Well, we still have more than enough time to tell about what little I have done, but I won't tell it if you don't promise me that you won't spread on the taffy."

It was an expression I had heard my own Scotch mother use, and I knew all that he meant by it.

"All right; you go on with the story."

Then followed as simple a statement as a Scotch dominie (chary with anything, especially words) could tell: of how he and the newspaper reporter whom the press later eulogized for having gone over the top with the marines, were waiting in the major's tent.

STAR DUST FROM THE DUGOUTS

They were to go down front. The major went off with the reporter and told the Doctor to follow with his orderly, a young lieutenant. The major and the reporter had barely gotten out of sight when a runner came in with the news that the colonel was wounded seriously and was lying in an abandoned trench on the other side of the town, about four miles away at the far end of a wheatfield.

The young lieutenant and the old "Y" secretary (whose colonel was the apple of his Scotch dominie's eye) started off for him. There were no stretcher-bearers in sight, but there was a stretcher. They carried that with them. Amid a constant hail of machine-gun bullets they went through the town. Nobody knew which house was occupied by Boches and which by Americans. Machine-gun bullets were flying every direction. They had to get through this village somehow to get to the wheatfield. Finally they reached the field. Then they had to crawl for four hundred yards on their stomachs along a low hedge across this field, in full view of the Germans, the field swept by rifle and machine-gun bullets, with now

THE DOMINIE "DOWN THE LINE"

and then a shell falling perilously near. One fragment from a shell tore a hole in the old secretary's coat and shoulder as he crawled and tore the hedge to his left into bits.

The young lieutenant kept yelling back, "Keep your head down, Doc!"

The old Scotch missionary chuckled as he told us this, pointing down to his rather prominent waist: "I was keeping down as close as I could get to the ground. I never did realize what a bother a stomach was before. I got to wishing I had dieted all my life as we crawled along that hedge. As it was I was so close to the earth that I scratched my nose."

Then we all laughed, and it was a good thing, for, as simply as that old man narrated his heroic story, it was the most intensely dramatic telling I have ever listened to. I was crawling with him myself along that hedge, pressing my body to the ground with him, hearing the bullets whistling through the hedge near me, hearing the lieutenant yell, "Keep your head down, Doc, or they'll get you!"

After crawling four hundred yards in this manner they finally dropped into the aban-

STAR DUST FROM THE DUGOUTS

doned trench, and there the colonel was lying. His first question was, "I wonder how Bare is?" referring to his major. Then he handed over his maps to the young lieutenant and fainted.

For two hours the three of them lay in that low, abandoned trench waiting for the fire to die down enough to let them crawl back again. As they lay there two gas shells fell near and they had to don gas helmets.

At this point the old Preacher interrupted his own story, much to the disgust of the newspaper reporter, to tell about how one evening he had been preaching to the marines when a "gas alert" sounded. The boys quickly donned their masks, and then one boy yelled out, "You know, you can still keep on talking with the French mask, but you have to breathe through your mouth with the English mask, and you can't talk." We both knew this, for we had had some uncomfortable experiences breathing through English masks ourselves, but it was interesting to hear the old man chuckle as he told about that evening when the boys wanted him to "put on a French mask and go right on talking."

THE DOMINIE "DOWN THE LINE"

Finally we got him back to his story.

"The colonel had a hard time getting his mask on, so I tried to help him, but he wouldn't let me move. The trench was so small that when I moved, my body was exposed. I felt so sorry seeing him try to put that mask on with his left shoulder shot through, that I rolled over and helped him. That's where I twisted my back, and why they had to send me to the hospital." He added these last words in disgust that he had been invalided for such a slight pretext. It was not according to his wishes; we could see that in his whole attitude. Then he went on with his story:

"After awhile we decided to make a try for it. The machine guns were still sweeping the field and shells were falling now and then. But we got the colonel on the stretcher. The lieutenant went in front and I behind. We lifted the stretcher with the colonel in it to the top of the parapet. Then we shoved it out as far as we could in front of us. Then we pulled and pushed and lifted and crawled and rolled over and over, and kept our bodies

STAR DUST FROM THE DUGOUTS

close to the ground, and scraped and edged and squirmed and grunted and finally we got the colonel across that stubbled wheatfield. It took us an hour and a half to get across that field. Then we had the village to go through, but about dark we got him to the woods, where it was comparatively safe. That's all there was to it. Not much of a story. Hardly worth telling. Others would have done the same and are doing it every day up there. Better men than this old missionary are risking and giving their lives every day without a thought of being a hero. I don't want you to make a lot of what I did. Please don't! I feel so humble in the face of what the boys are doing. Bless them every one! I often feel like applying to them the sentiment of Kipling's last line of 'Gunga Din' when I think of my boys, even some of them who smoke and drink, and whom I scold often."

"We all feel that way," I added, for it is one of my deepest convictions, after having been over there half a year, that those of us who serve as secretaries have nothing but the deepest of reverence and humility in the

THE DOMINIE "DOWN THE LINE"

face of the heroism and sacrifice and nobility of the boys in the trenches. Not one of us who has seen them in the front lines who would not get down in humility and wash their feet. I heard one "Y" secretary say, using the term "dog" which the boys themselves use to designate the orderly who acts as valet to an officer, "Whenever any of that gang o' 'doughboys' wants a 'dog,' I'm right here to say that he can call on me."

And so Dominie Clifford felt about his boys. One feels in this spirit of service to the lads, something of that thing which caused Jesus to get down on his knees to wash the feet of his disciples. This spirit cannot be imitated. It cannot be assumed. It cannot be put on and off as a garment. It must be a part of the fiber of the human soul. One saw much of it in France among the war workers; the willingness to be a "dog" for a boy.

There are those who will speak of the dignity of the church and the ministry. There are those who will scorn the idea of the church stooping or changing its ways for the boy. Indeed, I have heard these little ministers of

STAR DUST FROM THE DUGOUTS

God talk already. I have heard them say, "But why should the church change? Why shouldn't the boys change? Why should the church change its ways to reach three million boys?"

I say in answer to that, that the man who feels that way will be a stumbling-block not only in the way of Christ trying to reach the boy, but he will be a stumbling-block in the way of the boy trying to reach the Christ. I say in answer to that, that the minister of the church who talks like that has forgotten the very genius of the Master, whose way was to "Go out into the highways and byways and compel them to come in"; a willingness to go out after them, to search for them, to humble oneself to win them to himself.

In reconstruction work I believe that the minister of God who has the attitude toward the boys that Dominie Clifford had in France will win them a thousand times quicker than the minister who is so jealous of the dignity of the church that he sacrifices his chance of winning the boy. This must also apply to every man, young or old, capitalist or laborer in civilian life.

THE DOMINIE "DOWN THE LINE"

Is it any wonder that a man like dear Dr. Clifford would win the hearts of men anywhere, at home or at war? Humility, John Ruskin says, is "the first test of a truly great man." And real humility is self-sacrifice, the willingness to serve even unto death; the willingness to forget prejudices in the face of emergencies, remembering that men are more valuable than creeds or dogmas.

The boys "over there" took to such a chaplain or such a secretary with a great, hungry eagerness and welcomed him into their rough comradeship, even to the buttons on his uniform. Perhaps the picture of this man of God will help us to understand the type of approach that will win the boys as they come home to us.



*"Another minute and my
boys would be going over"*

CHAPTER III

THE MORNING WATCH

THE SOLDIER—HIS ATTITUDE TOWARD PRAYER

THE next three chapters of this book are devoted to the attitude of the soldier toward prayer, because one feels that this is vital to an understanding of the true religious life of the soldier in France; and, in turn, it is necessary to a complete understanding of the boy who is so rapidly coming back to us.

The church at home must realize that the men are not indifferent, are not scornful, are

THE MORNING WATCH

not averse, are not unbelievers in prayer. Such a realization will help the church to know that the fault is with ourselves if the men who are now in France come home only to find themselves ill at ease in our houses of worship. What is to come out of this attitude of the men toward prayer will depend upon what we do to keep fresh this fervent, simple, natural and real belief in intercession. God pity us if we fail!

We have an expression relating to prayer at home that has always had about it an atmosphere of sacredness, and that expression is the heading of this chapter, "The Morning Watch." Most of us who have used the expression have not really known what it means. There are those of us in civil life who seldom see the sun rise, but the soldier hears the call of the reveille usually before daylight, and no man, morning after morning, can see the sun rise out of the ocean or from the hills without somehow feeling nearer to the God of all nature. And so, whether or no, the soldiers in the American army kept the Morning Watch. True enough, they threatened "to kill

STAR DUST FROM THE DUGOUTS

the bugler" who called them to this Morning Watch, and one of their favorite songs carries this dire suggestion, but that is the way of the soldier.

And not only did he keep a Morning Watch physically, but he kept it in his prayer life also, both figuratively and literally. I have had hundreds of boys, in their finer moments, confess to the fact that morning and evening was their prayer time; and it was hard to tell which was the favorite hour.

It was the four-to-eight lookout. Seamen call it the "Morning Watch." We had climbed sixty-five feet in the darkness into the crow's nest, with the great transport swinging in the waves and on its zigzag course, and the wind blowing such a terrific gale that I thought I would fall to the deck every time the ship swung. For a pure landlubber the feat of climbing a mast is no easy before-breakfast exercise. When I started up that pole, it looked a good mile and a half to the top. When I got half-way up, the rungs took a dizzy notion to travel clear around the mast. As one of my fellow sufferers who was following

THE MORNING WATCH

me up the mast said, "I would have gone back, but that would have been doing the impossible twice." But at last, by sheer will power, we reached the top, crowded through the little hole in the floor of the crow's nest, and took the next half hour of the four-hour watch recovering from the climb. The Ledge Trail at Yosemite looks easy compared with that climb into the crow's nest. But, like the Ledge Trail, this climb was well worth the effort when you reached the top.

Morning was breaking, and it was to be an eventful morning, we soon found. A crimson splash along the eastern sky told us that it was to be a beautiful morning at least. This crimson promise was soon fulfilled when the great sun itself shot its way up out of the ocean as though it had been fired from a big gun over there somewhere on the German lines, away from which we were steaming as fast as one of Uncle Sam's big transports could plow the waves.

Then suddenly that world-old biblical phrase, "The morning watch," came flashing into my mind, and for the first time I knew the mean-

STAR DUST FROM THE DUGOUTS

ing of it all. I had conducted Morning Watch hours in my church work many times, but I never knew the wonder, the beauty, the meaning of that sweet hour just before, during, and following the dawning of a new day as I learned it from the crow's nest while sailing out of the east into the west, homeward bound from France.

Then suddenly, floating in the water, we saw several life preservers.

"Report them to the bridge," shouted the head watch.

"Number One," I called through the telephone.

"Number One?" was the response.

"Two life preservers floating on the port side of the ship about fifty feet away."

"O. K., Number One," was the report from the bridge.

Then in rapid succession we had to report ten, fifteen, twenty boxes floating in the water.

"There's a bale of cotton floating by," said the man on the "Morning Watch" with me.

"And there's another," I cried, "on the starboard side."

THE MORNING WATCH

"Number One, two bales of cotton floating, one on the port and one on the starboard side of the ship, about one hundred yards distant," I reported.

"O. K., Number One."

And so it went for four hours of that beautiful morning. Later, when we had climbed down from our lofty perch, we learned that we had been reporting the debris of a torpedoed French merchant vessel, which had been sunk the night before with all on board.

Then suddenly off in the distance we saw a strange ship. It looked neither like a battleship nor like a merchant vessel, but somewhat like both. We watched it for several seconds, and then reported it to the bridge as looking suspiciously like a cruiser type of submarine. The bridge confirmed our surmises and ordered the big guns both fore and aft trained on it. But evidently the German U-boat had seen us about the time that we had sighted her, for she submerged before the eager gunmen had the chance to adjust the heavy shells and pull the levers of the big guns.

We reported sighting the cruiser submarine

STAR DUST FROM THE DUGOUTS

to the ships within reach of our wireless, and during the next three days received reports from several ships that they too had sighted the "cruiser U-boat" on her way back to Germany.

The Morning Watch hour was significant in the great war, for it was at that hour that "over the top" signals came frequently. It was at this hour that more men passed "over the top" on their way "west" than at any other hour of the day or night, and many are the lads who have "gone west" during the Morning Watch along the edge of No Man's Land.

The word had passed through the regiment. To-morrow at "zero" the whole regiment would "go over."

It was the first time for most of the American boys, and few of those who crawled into their dugouts slept that night. "Zero" was at dawn the next morning. They were to go over under cover of the gray, foggy dawn and surprise the Boche. There was to be no artillery preparation.

The kid himself told me the story three days later as we sat in a hut:

THE MORNING WATCH

"I was always a timid kid, even at home. Any kid in town could lick me. I just naturally didn't seem cut out for fighting, and I always believed that I had a yellow streak in me.

"You know, sir, that's the thing us guys are most afraid of. We're not afraid to die, and we're not afraid of the Hun, but we're afraid of fear. We're afraid that when the time comes we'll not have the nerve.

"I told everybody that I was afraid. I thought that it might just as well be known, for I knew that when the time came to 'go over' I'd just naturally drop in my tracks. I knew that my legs would tremble so that I couldn't lift them, much less climb up the step that I had shoveled out and march out across No Man's Land, as we had been told to do, 'at a leisurely pace.' "

"Why, boy, they're all afraid," I told him. Then, for his comfort, I told him the story that I had heard in Paris:

A crowd of officers were sitting in the officers' club talking among themselves. A young lieutenant stood up, paced the floor dramatically, and said to the crowd: "I'm perfectly

STAR DUST FROM THE DUGOUTS

willing to admit that there's one thing that I'm afraid of. There's one thing that 'gets my goat,' and gets it good and proper."

"What's that?" the others asked him.

"Why, these Gothas. They come over in the night and they come over in the day, and you never know when or where they're going to drop their bombs. If you had a fighting chance—if you could dodge them—I wouldn't be afraid. Yes, there's one thing that I'm afraid of."

Then a gray-haired old war horse, a major in the regular army, arose. Everybody knew him. He had served through the entire Spanish-American War. He had seen some stubborn bush fighting in the Philippines. He had been on the border for a year. He spoke quietly and sincerely:

"Well, men, I've got just one thing to say in answer to the lieutenant, and that is that there are just about five hundred things in this war that I'm afraid of, and afraid good and proper."

"Gee, that's comforting!" the boy said to me as we sat talking. "I thought I was the only guy in our 'outfit' that was afraid."

THE MORNING WATCH

Then he went on with his story.

"It was at dawn that we were to go over. I was afraid that I would be afraid. Everybody in my company knew it. My officers knew it. They said it was because I am so young. I'm only seventeen, sir. God, how I prayed!"

"So you prayed, did you, lad?" I asked.

"Yes, I prayed as we stood there in the trenches waiting for the whistle. I had on my luminous watch. It was still dark, and 'zero' was four. It was ten minutes to four by the watch. In some ways it looked like a century to me, those ten minutes, and in other ways the seconds seemed to shoot past like the German machine-gun bullets do—so fast you can't see them.

"Yes, I prayed this prayer: 'O God, make me brave! Don't let me be afraid! Don't let me be afraid! I'd rather die than be afraid, God! I'd rather die than be afraid!'

"Then I looked at my watch again. We just had five minutes to wait and the whistle would go. I think I got to be fifty years old in those five minutes. I looked out across

STAR DUST FROM THE DUGOUTS

No Man's Land and I imagined that I could see myself hanging to the wires out there, dead. I knew just how I would look. I saw a man hanging to a telegraph wire one day at home. He had got hold of a live wire, and there he hung, like a dead rabbit, on the wire. I knew I would look like that man.

"Then I prayed again there in the dawn, 'O God, don't let me be afraid!'

"Then the old 'top sergeant' answered my prayer for God. I guess, sir, that that's a way God has of doing, isn't it? Getting human beings to answer prayers for him, doesn't he?"

"I'm sure that he does," I responded.

"Well, he did that time, anyhow. I looked at my watch. We had just two minutes. Then I began to shake all over. I was sure that everybody in the company could see my knees shakin'.

"Just then the old 'top' comes along, slaps me on the back, and says: 'Go to it, kid, old boy! You've got the goods! Buck up! You can do it!'

"And when that whistle blew all sense of fear left me, and over I went with the rest of

THE MORNING WATCH

them. My knees quit trembling, and I was so crazy to get up over that parapet that I didn't even use the step. I just jumped."

Then he stopped and blushed becomingly. I knew what he was coming to now, for that was the very thing that I had hunted him out to hear. "Maybe you saw it in the paper, sir—about—that big six-foot Boche I brought in. Honest, I don't know where I got him. All I can remember is that old 'top' slapping me on the back, and then the whistle blowing and then going over, and then the next thing I knew I had a big, six-foot Boche in front of me, and I was marching him in to divisional headquarters. The boys kidded me a lot and wanted to know where I'd found him, and if he'd captured me, and a lot of that stuff; but I got him, all right."

"Yes, you got him, boy, and that was a mighty fine job too."

"Yes, that was fine, but that isn't what I'm happiest about."

"What are you happiest about?"

"I'm happiest because it turned out that I wasn't afraid. I owe that to the old 'top.'"

STAR DUST FROM THE DUGOUTS

Good old 'top'! I guess God must have heard my prayers all right and sent the old 'top' to answer them."

Morning Watch experiences are varied in war times, as the above story indicates.

There was another Morning Watch hour. It was before one of the big battles on the western front. The old chaplain had got up with his boys, for he knew that they were to go over at dawning. It was a misty morning. He would have given all that he had to have gone with them, he loved them so. He said to me as he told me his story: "It didn't just seem right for my boys to be going over and me not with them. But those were my orders; to stay back and help guide the 'walking wounded' in, and to help in the dressing station when it was all over, so there I had to stick.

"But as the boys were silently filing into the front-line trenches I had the pleasure of taking every boy by the hand as he ducked under the camouflage at the edge of the road and went into the communication trench that led to the front. They were to go over that

THE MORNING WATCH

morning without artillery support. The plan was to surprise the Boche. Up to that time we had always prepared the way for going over with a heavy artillery curtain. I knew just when they were to go over, so I walked up to a little hill. This hill commanded a good view of the lines. I climbed up into a tree where there was an observation post. I kept an eye on my watch. The time was near. Another minute and my boys would be going over, some of them 'going west.'

"The thought broke my heart. Then up there in that tree I held a little Morning Watch service for them. I watched them go over. I couldn't distinguish their forms for the fog in the valley, but I said, 'Right down there, God—there in the fog—my boys and your boys are "going over the top." Take care of them, God. Go with them. Bless them! Keep them! And if they have to die, take them to thine arms of love, for Jesus' sake. Amen!'

"That was the strangest Morning Watch I ever kept. At home I make it a habit to keep the Morning Watch every day, but somehow

STAR DUST FROM THE DUGOUTS

God seemed nearer to me up there in that tree in the observation post than he ever seemed back in my study or in my home. And never did I pray with more intense earnestness than I did at that hour."

And so it is, fathers and mothers, that the chaplains, the secretaries, and even many officers, have kept guard over your boys; and so it is that men who love them, even over there in the cold, hard business of war, some spiritually visioned men, have not forgotten the Morning Watch. And always hovering back in the shadow was the Father "keeping watch above his own."

And so it is seen that our boys in France have not been ashamed to keep the Morning Watch. Indeed, that was a sacred hour to them in more ways than one. Often at that hour they were looking into the face of eternity. Men pray in a simple, natural and yet impassioned earnestness at such times. God hears. They know that. Face to face with death has taught them that.

When they come back, as they are now doing, will they find a naturalness in prayer in

THE MORNING WATCH

the pulpit, in the pews, in the prayer rooms, in the life of the church? Will they find this simplicity in prayer, this confidence in prayer, this burning belief that God hears and answers prayer; that He is ever near? that He sustains and gives courage to a man meeting death so that he may die without fear in his soul?

*"And grant me grace through
the fleeting hours to be A
MAN—and unashamed"*



CHAPTER IV

"WHEN A MAN'S ALONE"

THE SOLDIER — WHAT HE PRAYED

I BELIEVE that the attitude of the American soldier in France toward every phase of prayer is vital to an understanding of this same soldier as he returns from France. If he believed in prayer in France, he ought to believe in it at home; and I lay down the challenge to myself and to the church that we *must* keep alive this simple "talking to God" that the soldier has either learned in France for the first time, or that has been brought

“WHEN A MAN’S ALONE”

forth, from his innermost heart during these stressful days. In any case it is there. Nothing can show this attitude toward prayer any better than what he prayed. Most of the prayers which are quoted in this chapter are taken from a beautiful little booklet issued by the Y. M. C. A. under the direction of Dr. Robert Freeman, pastor of the First Presbyterian Church of Pasadena, California, who was the Pioneer Religious Work director of the Y. M. C. A. in France. More than five hundred thousand of these were issued and two months after they were printed it was impossible to get a copy in France. The boys eagerly grabbed them up.

I have seen them posted on hut walls, pinned to tent flaps, tacked up in a cook-house in a Negro camp, pasted in Bibles, and song books and in pocket Testaments next to the pictures of mothers, wives, sisters, and sweethearts. I have seen them in hotel rooms, from Bordeaux to Paris, from Brest to Verdun. In some wonderful fashion these prayers struck the right chord in the lyric hearts of our great crusaders, and they treasured these expressions

STAR DUST FROM THE DUGOUTS

for their great, sacred moments. Can such taste in literature, can such delight in prayerful, religious expression mean anything but gigantic possibilities for the church, now that the war is over, if we understand and believe?

The boy went thronging into a camp in America, with thousands of others as yet in civilian clothes. He was not even a "rookie." But he was not alone in this respect, for there were hundreds on the same train with him and none of them had uniforms. They were a joking, laughing crowd starting out on the first lap of "The Great Adventure."

Boys may live in a great cantonment, training for months, and an individual is so much a part of the great throng that he never had a minute to himself. In fact, he hungered to get away from the everlasting, constant presence of the crowd of men.

Men went marching down the streets of America in platoons, in companies, in regiments, in whole divisions, and they looked so much alike that only the eye of love can pick out an individual as they marched by. Men went on board the great transports in masses; sometimes

“WHEN A MAN’S ALONE”

as many as ten thousand to a ship. But when the submarine struck, each man died alone.

We who have seen the American soldier in France have seen him in masses. As he marched into the trench he seldom marched alone. He might not at night even be able to see the man ahead of him, but he was conscious of the presence of men of his own nation all about him, within touching distance. Even in midnight darkness, down in the trenches, he knew that off there to his left and to his right there was another American soldier keeping watch through the long night hours. But when the order came to go “over the top” each man went alone in his own heart; alone in his own courage, alone in his own bigness or littleness; and when death came, out there in No Man’s Land each man died alone.

When a group of aviators went up to patrol and met another group of enemy planes they fought in groups. Through given signals men may fight even in the air in formation and have a feeling of union, but when the deadly bullet finds its way home the aviator

STAR DUST FROM THE DUGOUTS

starts spinning earthward; and though there may be a thousand eyes turned on him from the earth, he dies alone.

Though whole divisions and army corps; indeed, entire armies stretching along a battle front for fifty miles may go into a given great drive, as was the case in the line stretching from Noyon to Rheims, but when it came time for a man to die, in the corner of a French field, or in a trench, each man died alone.

Night after night, while driving along the lines I have seen sentinels standing at the crossroads, or deep in the woods, or on little knolls, or in little boxes built to protect them from the rain and cold, or standing watch over an ammunition dump along a lonely field at two in the morning—each man alone.

A man may be sleeping in a billet in an old stable with hundreds of his comrades lying about him, and a sense of security comes over him as he hears their breathing and sees their forms on every hand, but when the great shell comes tearing through the stone walls of that billet on its death-dealing mission, each man died alone.

“WHEN A MAN’S ALONE”

When the seaplane went out on its patrol over the waters of the Bay of Biscay it carried three men, the pilot, the mechanic, and the observer. There was a sense of security in the fact that three were there. I know this because I have been on such a trip, but when suddenly something goes wrong with the engine; when the ship falls into the ocean fifty miles from shore, begins to sink, and forty-eight hours have passed and it looks as though there were no hope, and death faces those three lads, the fact suddenly comes home to them that they do not face death as a trio but each man faces it alone. The boys of the army have learned that when they “go west” they go alone. Not even the best “pal” can go with them.

Then there were lonely night watches, when, even though surrounded by a hundred friends, a man fights out his own sorrows, his own loneliness, his own heartache—alone.

It was because wise men knew this, wise men who had love in their hearts and who knew that there is just one Being and that Being is God who can go with a man into

STAR DUST FROM THE DUGOUTS

these "Alone" places, that the Y. M. C. A., through its great-hearted religious director, got out a little pamphlet, full of prayers for just such emergencies that came to the lad in the army.

One night in a Paris hotel an American lad had fought a great battle for purity. It was the first time that he had ever been in a large city, and duty had sent him there. There had been a tremendous temptation the night before. It had come to him out on the Boulevard. He had not as yet conquered, although he had won the first skirmish. But *she* was still out there in the darkness, waiting for him. He knew that, just as *she* was there waiting for any American lad. To him she would speak softly the few American phrases that she had learned, and the very childishness with which she spoke them made them seem harmless.

"Bon Americaine!"

"Mon Cherie Americaine."

"Have a kiss for me, my Americaine?"

"Come wiz me, Americaine."

Then he saw on the wall of his hotel room

“WHEN A MAN’S ALONE”

a neatly printed card, with a red triangle at its top. The red attracted his attention and he walked over to the wall above his bed and read the “Prayer for Morning” which Dr. Freeman had written for him:

“Strong Son of God;

I dare not go into this day without asking Thy blessing.

The memory of other days spent without Thee is too vividly before me,

Days when I have been weak and ignoble,

Days when I have lived only to please myself,

Caring neither for right, nor honor, nor the high welfare of others,

In the sanity of the early morning, I humbly come to Thee,

Who alone canst make me strong,

And pledge myself to seek to do Thy Will,

I, who would wage war to make a good world,

Want to win the first battle in my own life.

Make me then victor for to-day, over the sins which so easily beset me,

And grant me grace through the fleeting hours to be A MAN—and unashamed. Amen.”

And somehow when he had read that prayer

STAR DUST FROM THE DUGOUTS

from the card entitled "When a Man's Alone" the thing outside seemed a little thing and not at all beautiful and high and holy; and he was strong again and went to his bed clean of soul and clean of body, with the song of a great victory ringing in his heart.

The evening prayer too, in this little folder was especially beautiful when you get the picture of the lad up front in the trenches. The evening shadows are falling and with the falling of night the real work of war begins. The restless Germans, almost before the sunlight has disappeared, have started their star shells, and these are beginning to light up No Man's Land as our boys peer out anxiously across this desolate stretch of death and desolation with the barbed wires massed in the dim shadows. Every night brought its uncertainties. There were raids to be carried out and certain boys were designated for this raiding party. There was always patrol work to do. There may be a German attack. Each night comes on apace, many of them gloriously beautiful nights, some of them full moonlight nights; some of them ushered in

“WHEN A MAN’S ALONE”

with mist and rain; but all of them full of the unknown, full of possibilities of death; and each boy knew that as each night fell he might never see another morning break. He reached into his pocket, pulled out “When a Man is Alone” and found that Dr. Freeman has thought of this hour for him. The lonely sentinel on his lonesome watch found that he too had been thought of; and each in his own place, read “The Prayer at Night”:

“Lord of my life, the shadows fall;
And, in the shadows, what surprises lurk
I cannot tell;
What blaze of death shall through the night en-
circle me,
What subtle foe steal o’er the land-unclaimed,
What pain, or more, awaits for us who tensely
watch,
All this I may not know. But still I hold
God’s in His heaven; aye, nearer to me than
heaven,
Thou, Christ, art here, here by my side, here in my
heart;
No man need face the shadows all alone.
Give ear then to my prayer;

STAR DUST FROM THE DUGOUTS

Forgive my sins that rise in accusation now;
And let that sweet forgiveness melt my heart
In tender thoughts toward one-time friends across
the sea.

Send me Thy peace to keep me, come what will,
And mark my vow made in the silences with
Thee—

Whatever years now lie ahead for me,
I live for God. Amen.”

And what boy has not felt his heart melt as he has read, somewhere in a hotel room, or in a billet lying in mid-afternoon at rest from the night's work, or down in the trenches, that beautifully sweet “Prayer For the Folks at Home”? How magically the author had caught the universal hunger of the men!

One boy said to me as we read that prayer together with tear-wet eyes: “We wouldn't be consistent fighters if we didn't think enough of the very homes and the very country for which we are fighting to get homesick for it. It doesn't make the American army any less a fighting army that it gets homesick. That kind of army will fight to the death just because it is big enough to have such a love for

“WHEN A MAN’S ALONE”

its home that it hungers for it.” So Dr. Freeman caught and put into words the heart throb of all in his prayer for the folks back home, and we wept as we read it over, and nothing that we read or thought on so stirred our souls to the real spirit of prayer like these words, wherein he had voiced for us all that we had felt and could not say as we wished to say it:

“Father above, and Best Friend of us all,
Remember in Thy tender mercy
The hearts that beat for me.
I thank Thee for their prayers;
But more; I thank Thee for the love that prompts
their prayers;
The love that makes them fancy me as of heroic
mold.
They are but human souls, those parents, kinsmen,
friends,
And that one woman Thou didst send to teach me
love indeed,
Whose kindly hearts will dread each coming day,
And dream of danger through the night,
Send them Thy peace, O Lord.
Bid them to know their cries are not in vain.

STAR DUST FROM THE DUGOUTS

Suffer no crushing circumstances to lay them low.
Let Thy best gifts be theirs, health and their daily
bread.
The love of friend and neighbor,
The joy that follows work well done,
And the calm confidence that, though I am far
away,
I will not fail their hope, or bruise their pride.
Gather us all under Thy wings;
And in the night watches set our spirits free
To meet where sea nor land can intervene;
Until at length we win 'Back Home,'
Or in Thy mercy meet within Our Father's house.
Amen."

I had occasion to say once on Mother's Day to a crowd of officers and men who were gathered in a banquet: "Imagine, men, if you can, the sneers that are passing over the faces of the Kaiser and his staff as he knows that in this day the American army is stopping in the midst of war to remember mother. They must surely be laughing in derision at such a thing, for the tender things do not come within the scope of the German military mind. It cannot grasp the fact that the man who can

“WHEN A MAN’S ALONE”

stop in the midst of battle to remember mother;
to be tender, to pray, to be kindly, and humane,
will, in the end, make the warrior that fights
until death for the very things that he stops
to worship and to love.”

No we did not forget mother, and Dr.
Freeman did not forget her when he wrote
and dreamed and wept and sobbed out this
great prayer for the sometime inarticulate
mother to pray when alone:

“Good God, who, through my life has been my
stay,

By whose ordaining joy and sorrow sought me out,
Whose chiefest earthly gift to me has been my son,
I turn to Thee in this, my anguish hour.

No longer may I guide his steps,

No longer does he come at eventide

To give in his pure eyes the mirror of his soul.

My baby gone; gone is my little lad;

And now a man stands in his place,

Stands where I cannot be, or see, or shield.

God guard Thou him.

Make him to know the Lord is still his Shepherd.

Endow him with courage and good sense.

Put Thy spirit in his heart,

STAR DUST FROM THE DUGOUTS

That he may be the man I hope to see
When guns are still and strife is overpast.
Whisper to him, where'er he lies this night,
The words I fain would speak could I be near;
For, though he is no more a child,
I always am his mother. Amen."

And finally this tender, sympathetic interpretation of the prayers of a soldier lad in his threefold struggle to be brave, to be pure, and to be true. This little gem of a "Soldier's Prayer" has already found its way into Association Men, numerous religious papers, and it has been distributed literally by millions throughout the American army in France on a neat little yellow stiff card, printed in red and black ink with a red triangle at the top. I have found them stuck up on the walls in Y. M. C. A. huts, in hotel rooms, in billets, on trunks, in warehouses, in automobiles, where boys have pasted, or tacked, or nailed them.

"White Captain of my soul, lead on;
I follow Thee come dark or dawn.
Only vouchsafe three things I crave:
When terror stalks, help me be brave.

“WHEN A MAN’S ALONE”

**Where righteous ones can scarce endure
The siren call, help me be pure.
Where vows grow dim, and men dare do
What once they scorned, help me be true.”**



CHAPTER V

THE ANGELUS IN WAR TIME

THE SOLDIER — WHEN HE PRAYED

Not only did the boy pray when he was alone, but he prayed when he passed through that grueling sorrow of parting from his loved ones at the train and the pier. I have seen boys grit their teeth, set their jaws, grip their fists until the blood came, the meanwhile muttering fiercely, and earnestly between their teeth, "God help me now to be strong!" When the shells fall, and the "over the top" whistle blows at "zero" just as he shoots over he prays,

THE ANGELUS IN WAR TIME

"God help me now!" It was as natural with him as breathing.

Somehow France is the land of "The Angelus." Millet has made it such for us. But if we who love God in America will seize the opportunity that is coming, will seize with love and fearlessness, with a strong faith and a great belief, America too shall be the land of an evening prayer, an "Angelus," as it shall be the land of a "Morning Watch."

The great, burning red war-sun was setting behind the Golden Gate, for this chapter begins at home; finds its way to France, and then comes home again; for, after all, most of the thought, the longings, the heart-hunger, the loneliness and the prayers of America begin at home and end in France and then come home again, as the boys are coming, like birds at eventide.

Out they go, these prayers, on wings of love; wings of mother love, wings of father love; wings of baby love, wings of girlish love; and back again to nestle in the heart from whence they flew.

Prayer never meant more to millions of

STAR DUST FROM THE DUGOUTS

human beings than it has meant during the last four years. Never more fervent prayers, never prayers more drenched with the dew of tears; never more desperate, needy prayers found their way to the Father heart than in these days in American life.

The great train was pulling out on the first lap of its trans-continental journey. A gray-haired woman stood looking into a boy's eyes and a slender girl stood beside her. The boy in khaki had a hungry look in his face, but that hungry look was buried in a quiet reserve that bespoke the first battle in a soldier's life; that first battle which came to millions of them at the parting of the ways. Evidently, the girl was his sweetheart.

The sun was just sinking. One calls that kind of a sun a "war-sun" because it is blood-red. There were no clouds to be made glorious with rose and gold; none to take away the significance of that blood-red ball sinking behind the Golden Gate. I have seen many such since in France. I have seen them where the smoke of bursting shells rolled against the horizon. I saw a "war-sun" one evening be-

THE ANGELUS IN WAR TIME

hind the Arc de Triomphe looking down the great Champs-Élysées from the Louvre and that night a great Boche raid came over Paris and left its toll of dead. I saw a blood-red war sun another night in a port of entry down in Brittany.

“Good-by, George; be good; remember that mother loves you. And, George—George, dear—don’t forget to pray!”

It was the mother who spoke. The girl seemed timid about saying anything. She was his sweetheart. She had a quiet respect for the mother’s place in that scene. She didn’t want to intrude her more recent claim to love in the mother’s lifelong claim. But the boy turned to her as the train came in.

“Good-by, dear heart. And you two girls of mine—,” then he smiled as he gently pulled them together, as if he would have each strengthen the other, the mother and the sweetheart. It was a wonderful thing that he did there. In a mere gesture he linked together for all the uncertainties of the coming months and years his sweetheart and his mother.

He seemed to sense the fact that these two

STAR DUST FROM THE DUGOUTS

women who both loved him, and who both had a right to love him—each differently, each fervently—must give strength to each other during his absence. He seemed to know that each would watch the mails eagerly for his letters, that each would scan with the same trembling anxiety the casualty lists.

“You two—you two—are all I have—” Then he stopped, but not to weep. There was a suggestion of tears, but he kept them back. It was hard enough without that to add to the parting. The women were being brave. So must he be. Then the war-sun sank. It left behind it no glory of color. It just sank quietly into the sea behind the Golden Gate, but the memory of that parting between the khaki-clad soldier and his two “girls,” his mother and his sweetheart, shall remain forever, an evening benediction.

Before I witnessed that scene the blood-red “war-sun” was an ominous thing to me. Since then I have never seen such a sun sink that it has not seemed to be a benediction at the close of the day—a “God bless and keep you” to the poor, troubled world. I have had a

THE ANGELUS IN WAR TIME

“war-sun” turned into an Angelus for me because of that quiet, reserved, brave parting. I never think of those two women that I do not see them together in the quiet of the evening sharing their letters from “him,” sharing their grief, and perhaps their heart-aches. I never think of that group that I do not see the girl running in at the close of her day’s work, or her school to nestle in the arms of “his” mother, for thereby the world becomes stronger in war-time and peace-time, by sharing its grief with others. And all over the world, especially all over America, this scene was universal. One could see this trio at the boats in New York and Newport News. One could see it in the great railroad centers as the trains pulled out for the camps and on their first lap in the journey to France. It was a great Angelus of lonely hearts.

Those who have been in France during the war have learned to understand the great painter Millet. It was a no uncommon thing to see in the fields of France just such peasants as Millet painted. I have seen “The Gleaners” in many fields of France during the past year.

STAR DUST FROM THE DUGOUTS

For if ever in its history France has had to "glean" the last straw from her fields and the last man from her homes, it is now. The gleaning has been going on for more than four years, and France made this gleaning with a heroic willingness that thrilled the world, going down into the family life and into her homes until the youngest boys themselves, decorated with the colors of their "Class," went marching along the village streets with drums beating and radiant faces.

One of the most pathetic things that I saw in France was the visible tokens of this "gleaning" of France. Everywhere, last spring, one could hear down the crooked streets of France the sound of a drum corps. Then presently there would flash into view a crowd of marching boys who looked as if they ought still to be in high school. It was the Class of 19—. As they marched by, one's heart sank at first to see their youth and to know that they too were soon to be "cannon-fodder"; but a second look at their faces and one's heart leaped with a thrill of elation, for there was a look there that said, "As long as France, even in

THE ANGELUS IN WAR TIME

its gleanings, has boys that can go to war with that high look in their eyes, the safety of the Allied cause cannot be endangered."

But the real gleaners were in the fields everywhere in France. I have seen them, the bent old peasants, almost exact prototypes of Millet's "The Gleaners," with bended backs gathering up the last wisps of straw, with shells bursting in the fields about them and the roar and rumble of battle not far away, and the white roads of France that skirted the very fields in which they were working, heavy with war traffic. Yet "The Gleaners" worked on in spite of the war. There was something heroic in this sight. It linked itself with the scene back at home in some strange way.

And one may see "The Angelus" group these war days anywhere in France. It is as though a great Millet were still painting his peasant folk bowing in prayer at the ringing of the Angelus.

I shall never forget one beautiful evening, when a great "war-sun" was sinking in the west, without a single cloud, without a touch of color other than the blood-red of the great

STAR DUST FROM THE DUGOUTS

round disk itself, which seemed on this evening to be as large as a great truck.

We were going "down the line" with some provisions for the furthest hut. A message had come in, carried by a "runner" sent from the major's office about supper time. It said, "My boys are going into the trenches at midnight and the secretary at Beaumont says that he is out of supplies. I hope that it will be possible for you to send some down."

It was a perilous trip. Every man had been working from daylight, and no man there cared to take that trip down the line. It meant that whoever went would have to drive over the old shell-pocked road without lights after darkness fell. It meant that the truck would have to run underneath the regular evening "Hate" of the Boche, for every evening just after sunset while the smoke was curling from the supper fires the German batteries on the hill to the east strafed the American batteries on the hill to the west. Then the American batteries sent back their replies. Under this great, double parabola of shell fire the trucks had to be driven night after night.

THE ANGELUS IN WAR TIME

Sometimes the shells fell short and pocked the road. More often they found their marks four miles beyond, but it was no pleasant sensation to be driving a truck under a great arch of shells going both directions. What if two of them should meet in mid air and have a collision? Personally I always expected this. I had seen two locomotives do this very thing once and I never did like the memory of that scene.

But the work had to be done. This was a desperate call. A major who was interested enough in his boys to send a "runner" to headquarters to ask that an extra truckload of supplies be sent down so that his boys "going in" that night might have their last "Good-by, and Good luck" put into some practical form, was not to be denied. Besides, that was what we were there for.

I'll confess frankly that I for one didn't want to go. I didn't like that barrage of shells in the slightest. Norton, always said: "Ah, they're up there so high they'll never fall short. Don't pay any attention to them."

STAR DUST FROM THE DUGOUTS

But I couldn't help remembering that night that Norton stopped the truck near "Dead Man's Curve" while the Boche was shelling the road; stopped to go back with his flash light and hunt for a cigar that he had dropped out of his mouth when the truck shot into a shell hole. I couldn't help remembering that he had said that night, "You don't mind if I stop, do you, Doc? That's the first good cigar I've had for three months, and I'll be blamed if I want to lose it!" I did mind, but I didn't say so.

Nor did I on the night of this story say anything when he volunteered for the both of us to take the load down.

"Doc and I'll go; we don't mind, do we, Doc, old boy?"

I did mind, but I hadn't the nerve to admit it in the face of the fact that I had known that this big, brave fellow himself had been "down the line" already three times that day; that he had been working since daylight, and that he was now willing to make another trip, the hardest trip of the day, down under that canopy of shell fire, on a trip that meant

THE ANGELUS IN WAR TIME

two o'clock in the morning before he could possibly get back. In the face of this kind of sacrifice who was I, just a common helper on a truck, to say "No"? So I volunteered to go along.

And that trip shall stand out forever in my memory; not because of the unusually heavy "strafing" that we drove under that night; not because of the fact that we helped to hand the stuff out to the boys as they marched through our furthest hut down under the camouflaged road into the communication trench to the front trenches, but because of something we saw just as we left Toul that wonderful evening.

There it was, that great red "war-sun" sinking into the west. Even Norton was impressed by it. He said, "Some beautiful night anyway, Doc, even if one of the Boche shells does fall short?"

He had a most comforting fashion of starting off like that, with some such expression as "Fine night for an air raid, Doc"; or, "I'll bet the wind's just right for a gas attack tonight"; or, "A couple of 'Y' drivers killed

STAR DUST FROM THE DUGOUTS

right over there just before you came, Doc!" He was a cheerful man to work with. But somehow the sunset to-night had touched the deeper things, which I always knew were hidden behind his rough exterior, and before we had gone far in the face of that great red sun he was talking about his wife and his kiddies at home. Then he showed me their pictures as we rumbled along.

Then we saw a sight that subdued us both and made him stop the machine for a minute in reverence. Suddenly, off in a little village, partly destroyed by shell fire a cathedral bell began to ring. It was a beautiful sound, coming across the bare, lonely fields of France in the face of that "war-sunset."

But just in the foreground, two old women and a man were walking along bearing heavy baskets on their shoulders. They had just started to cross a field. When the cathedral bell began to ring they laid their baskets down and all three of them bowed in prayer and remained so until the Angelus ceased.

Norton had already stopped the truck. I looked at him, and, much to my astonishment,

THE ANGELUS IN WAR TIME

his hat was off and his gray curls played in the breeze. His head too was bowed.

"I always respect anybody's religion," he said by way of explanation to me.

"Do you pray much?" I asked him, as we started on when the Angelus had ceased.

"I pray all the time. I never start out with this old bus down the line that I don't pray. That wife of mine and that kid made me promise. Besides, it gives me a sense of security anyhow when those shells are whining overhead and one of 'em is liable to fall short any minute."

We were silent for a mile or two and then I said to him, "Well, I didn't want to come down again to-night, but that was worth it; not only to see that Angelus in real life, but to hear you say that."

And it was, a thousand times over.

"A man's a fool that doesn't pray—that's all I got to say," was his laconic reply.

We heard a good deal here at home from a certain type of writer about the boys singing "Where Do We Go from Here?" and "There'll Be a Hot Time In the Old Town." They did

STAR DUST FROM THE DUGOUTS

sing such songs at times. Of course they did, but they also sang with just as much fervor "Sweet Hour of Prayer," "Rock of Ages, Cleft for Me"; "Nearer, My God, to Thee"; "Jesus, Saviour, Pilot Me"; "O God, Our Help in Ages Past"; "Softly Now the Light of Day," and others of this class. Somehow they seemed to select, if they were given a choice, the hymns with prayer in them. I have no doubt but that it was because, down deep in their hearts, they liked to sing their prayers to God. Especially did one observe this down on the front lines.

I remember a young lieutenant who said one day, "We don't have any chaplain, nor any Y. M. C. A. secretary, and I notice that my boys miss it, so I'm going to have a religious service for them myself." He was in the Chateau-Thierry fight, and his boys were hungry to give expression to their prayer spirit. They were facing death every hour of the day and night. This lieutenant was never known especially for his religious activities at home, but he loved his "boys," and, if there was no chaplain at hand he was going to see to it

THE ANGELUS IN WAR TIME

that they had "prayers," as he called a religious service, "If I have to conduct them myself," were his words. And conduct them he did, much to the joy of the boys of his platoon.

"We feel better going into the line after that meeting," was the way one boy expressed his appreciation.

"You don't have to have a preacher to pray, do you?" another said.

The boys prayed, whatever some men may say. I have heard them praying all over France. I have prayed with them in the hospitals. I have never been in a crowd where there was anything but the finest kind of appreciation at the suggestion of prayer. I have prayed with "shell-shocked" boys in their own wards; boys made up of Catholics, Jews, non-believers, and when I have said, "Boys, may I have a word of prayer before I go?" there has always been instantaneous, respectful, and even hearty assent.

I shall never forget the vesper services that were so popular in France in the camps and hospitals, usually out of doors, where the boys

STAR DUST FROM THE DUGOUTS

liked to gather for their devotions. One scene is that of an Angelus, where a thousand colored men stood under the setting sun, with bowed heads praying, just after they had sung, in their sweetly harmonious voices, "The Old Time Religion." Another scene was that of an aviation group who stood in a vesper service with bowed heads praying. I had just read them that beautiful hymn for áviators, "Lord, Guard and Guide the Men Who Fly":

"Lord, guard and guide the men who fly
Through the great spaces of the sky.
Be with them traversing the air
In darkening storm or sunshine fair.

"Thou who dost keep with tender might
The balanced birds in all their flight,
Thou of the tempered winds, be near,
That, having thee, they know no fear.

"Control their minds with instinct fit
What time, adventuring, they quit
The firm security of land:
Grant steadfast eyes and skillful hand.

THE ANGELUS IN WAR TIME

"Aloft in solitudes of space
Uphold them with thy saving grace.
O God, protect the men who fly
Through lonely ways beneath the sky."

I had been up with one of the boys that afternoon, "Through lonely ways beneath the skies," and the whole theme of my talk to them had been saturated with my new experience in the air under the guiding hand of a skilled pilot in whom I had complete confidence. And so when I came to the end of that vesper hour with them and evening was falling, I said: "Now, boys, we'll all stand and have a little prayer together. I have just read you the prayer that the folks back home are praying and singing for you as you fly; now I want you to pray for them."

During the next five minutes at least twenty boys offered brief—some of them very awkward but sincere—prayers for the folks back home. I wish I could reproduce some of them, but that wouldn't be fair. But it was a wonderfully sweet hour, and the Christ was very near to us.

When I got home and was telling this story

STAR DUST FROM THE DUGOUTS

to a great crowd of people in a certain Eastern city in a big open-air meeting, an old man came up to me with a sweet little six-year-old girl. I took her into my arms and gave her a kiss on each cheek; one on her nose and one on her eyes. I'm always afraid to venture at kissing other folks' babies on their lips these days of bugs, and germs, and influenza, but I'll venture that their mothers won't care if you confine it to cheeks and nose and eyes.

The grandfather said as he brought her up, "I want you to have another Angelus story to tell."

Then he told me one of the sweetest stories I have heard, of how in that particular neighborhood one of the churches rings its chimes every evening at eight o'clock. As the chimes play some beautiful hymn, such as "Day Is Dying in the West," or "Sweet Hour of Prayer," all the people bow in prayer for the "boys over there."

The little girl whom he brought to me has a daddy in France, and she takes this hour of prayer very seriously. It means much to her dear child's heart.

THE ANGELUS IN WAR TIME

The very night that I spoke in that city when the chimes rang, according to the grandfather's story, the little girl noticed that her grandfather was not bowing his head in prayer, for, as grown folks often do, he had become engrossed in his evening paper and had forgotten.

Suddenly the little tot tugged at his paper and said, "Gran-daddy, let's pray for my daddy now like the preacher said when the bell rings."

Then the two of them, the gray-haired father of the boy over there and the little baby of the boy over there, got down on their knees, and this was the dear childish prayer of her: "Dear God, take care of my dear, sweet daddy, and bring him back to mother and me and Gran-daddy safe. Amen."

Since then, no sun sets, no Angelus hour ever comes, no church chimes ring, that I do not offer my own silent prayer for the boys "over there," and for those who are coming home to us; a prayer that we may be big enough to understand, and close enough to God in our own prayer life to be in tune with the spirit of the Angelus that is buried in their souls.

STAR DUST FROM THE DUGOUTS

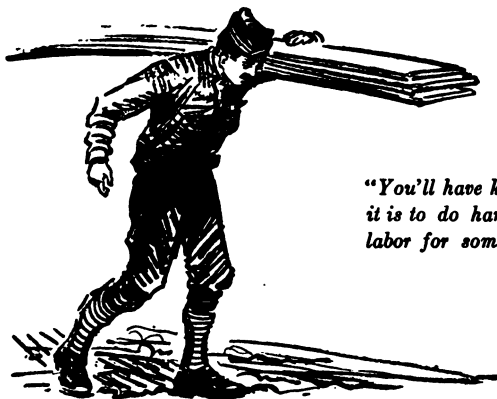
It may never find utterance, save we bring it forth with our understanding and our sympathy, but—before God—*it is there.*

One last prayer story: It was a “Y” hut, winter, and night. There had been a “movie.” Then followed the “Good-night vesper service” that the Canadian “Y” always held. In spite of certain criticisms because the Y. M. C. A. has mixed up movies and religion, this is the way it worked.

The hut was crowded with men, and outside several hundred had been standing, listening through the open windows. The secretary who told me this story, when the prayer time came, went out to stop some noisy French boys so that there would be quiet during the prayers. As he stepped out into the winter night, much to his surprise, he found that the more than a hundred boys out there in the cold had lifted their hats and were standing there in the snow with bared heads during the prayer that was being lifted by the secretary inside the hut. Does this sound much like irreverence? Does this sound as if “movies” and religion do not mix?

THE ANGELUS IN WAR TIME

And so let the church remember that in the heart of the boy who is coming home to us these days there is a deep and an ever-abiding reverence for the things of God; and among the highest of these things is prayer.



*"You'll have known what
it is to do hard physical
labor for somebody else"*

CHAPTER VI

THE BREWERY GANG

THE SOLDIER — HIS ATTITUDE TOWARD THE PREACHER WHO SERVED

THERE are few preachers who went to France who did not win out. And proud I am to say that most of them won their way not by preaching but by serving. They got down on their knees not only to pray, but to lift trucks out of mud and shell holes, trucks loaded with supplies for the soldiers; they slept on the ground, in the woods; they asked for no luxuries, and went without the

THE BREWERY GANG

necessities often, sharing the common sufferings of the soldier; and in so doing they won his heart forever.

I was never so proud of the men of my profession as I was when I saw them in action in France. Men gray with years, some of them past fifty, carried their end of the physical load with young men half their age. It was a daily miracle to me how they did it. I take my shoes off in retrospect because I am on sacred ground when I think of them, lifting heavy loads of chocolate, emptying cars of tent poles, out in the snow and rain, without a whimper; working all night, losing sleep, that they might do the thing that the Master counted most worth while of all things—serving humanity. It was a glorious thing to see.

One of the leading directors of the Y. M. C. A. work in France, said one evening to me in Paris: "Well, I take my hat off to your preachers. After what I saw down in the woods to-night [he referred to the Bois du Belleau], I'm for your preachers. They're a game lot of men."

These preachers will understand what it

STAR DUST FROM THE DUGOUTS

means to serve, now that they are back. They will understand, as never before, the meaning of that text, "Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest." They will understand something of the thing that was in the heart of Christ when he got down on his knees in humility; and, donning the garb of a slave, washed his disciples' feet.

American soldiers responded to this kind of service, even more than they did to the preaching-kind of a preacher. The serving-kind of a servant won their hearts. The most loved men in France were the preachers who got down on their stomachs in the mud to build huts; who got down on their backs in the snow to fix the trucks that were to carry supplies up to the boys in the front lines; the kind of preachers (some of them occupants of the largest pulpits at home) who were willing to sweep out the floors of huts, to carry packs, to tramp through the mud, to get down on their knees to mend a tent flap as well as to pray. I do not think that this willingness to serve will lose any of its appeal at home.

THE BREWERY GANG

I do not know how individuals will be able to carry it out at home. Some may want to go into a factory to work during a vacation, and some may feel impelled to interest themselves vitally in the problems of the toilers of their cities so that they may know first hand what it all means. All I do know is that that kind of service won the hearts of the men in France. And I know that the spirit which prompted that kind of service is the spirit of the Master and that it will win the hearts of men in peace or war.

The old "Count" was just an average business man in Washington, D. C. He had never had much to do with the church or with preachers, because, rightly or not, he had gotten the impression that they were men with easy berths, not very productive, and not very willing to share the hard, everyday facts and labor of life. He learned differently in France, as hundreds of men did, and they are coming back, expecting to find that kind of men in the churches, and when they do find them they will bind these Christian leaders to their hearts with hoops of steel.

STAR DUST FROM THE DUGOUTS

The "Count" and the "Major" illustrate what I am trying to say, although both were rough men outside; rough outside, but with hearts as tender as a mother's touch of love, inside.

"What kind of stuff are you Y. M. C. A. guys selling here anyhow?" the Major asked, as he stepped down into the dugout.

It was the "Count" of the Y. M. C. A. Brewery Gang who answered him, as quick as a flash:

"We're selling joy, sir—just joy. Of course we handle a little chocolate, and soap, and a few cigarettes and chewing gum, but joy's our best commodity. The other things are side issues."

And from that day on the Major and the "Count" were warm friends.

"A guy that sells joy to my boys is the kind of a fellow I want around."

And thus it was that whenever the "Count" wanted a detail of men to help erect a hut, or a detail of men to help bury a dead soldier, or a detail of men to unload a car, or an extra automobile to handle some freight for the

THE BREWERY GANG

boys, it was always coming from the Major. It was known everywhere along the line that the Major believed in that "Brewery Gang" down at Toul. "They've got the stuff to work with this man's army," the Major said one day to a group of soldiers.

If you had asked the "old timers" in the "Brewery Gang," those who had gone in with the first division of American troops, what requirement you had to have to be a member of the "Brewery Gang," they would have told you that you had to have a "weak mind and a strong back," but if they ever caught you saying that yourself, you might have had your head stuck in a snow bank. It was all right for the gang itself to say this about itself and its members, but no outsider dare slander it thus.

This was because the "Brewery Gang" was a select organization of Y. M. C. A. truck drivers which made its home in an old, abandoned French brewery, the upper story of which was utilized for a warehouse.

It was made up of a personnel of chauffeurs, college professors, preachers, teachers, and busi-

STAR DUST FROM THE DUGOUTS

ness men. Most of them had never driven anything but touring cars in their lives, and two thirds of them never had had a look inside of the machinery of their own cars at home.

"I sent mine around to the garage about once a month for an overhauling, and I never turned a nut before I joined this gang; but every Tuesday here in France, mud or rain or snow, I get down on my back under the truck and fill the grease cups, oil her up, and get her in condition for the next week's work. I've learned more about an automobile since I joined this gang than I ever knew in my life before, and when I go home I'm going to show those garage guys a thing or two."

The "Count," known from one end of the division to the other, was the philosopher of the "Brewery Gang." When the war first broke out he was, as already explained, just an ordinary business man in Washington, D. C. The Chamber of Commerce sent him over in Y. M. C. A. work. One thing he hated above all other things, and that was a preacher. It was as much as one's life was worth on applying for admission to the "Brew-

THE BREWERY GANG

ery Gang" to let it be known that one was a parson. After that it was the work of a month or so to overcome this initial handicap. But at last, after having seen eight or ten preachers in action, the "Count," who was above all things fair and just, began to change his mind about the average parson.

One day he said, "All I got to say right now is that, after seeing you preacher guys work to-day, I'd go hear any of you preach if I happened to be in your towns. I never did go to church much before the war, although I read the Bible every day, but when I see you fellows get down on your knees in the mud to help build a hut to shelter the boys out there who are giving their lives for us, I say that it would sound good back home some day to see you down on your knees praying. Got to hand it to you!"

The "Brewery Gang" was no respecter of persons or of days. Sunday was just the same as any other day to them; not because they wanted to work on Sunday, but because either they worked or the boys "down the line" went without their supplies. There were

STAR DUST FROM THE DUGOUTS

always two or three cars to unload on Sunday. At first this went a bit hard for the parsons of the gang, even though they knew the necessity of the times. But the "Count" comforted them one Sunday evening after they had worked all day in the snow and rain unloading a car load of lumber for huts. The car had previously been used for coal and had never been cleaned, so in addition to the mud and snow each parson had a thick layer of coal dust all over his face and his clothes.

"Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy"—with this sentence the "Count" started off that evening as the gang sat around an open fireplace drying their feet.

"Well, you fellows may think that unloading that car to-day was not keeping the Sabbath day very holy. Maybe some of you even forgot that it was Sunday. I wonder what your congregations would have thought if they had seen you to-day, weary of body and soul, coming home from your work? Well, when I think of my own nineteen-year-old kid somewhere in the line; and when I think of what these warm huts mean to them in

THE BREWERY GANG

these cold winter days, with no floors on their own tents, and the mud three inches deep where they sleep, and the Y. M. C. A. hut the only decently warm and lighted place they have to go to; when I think of the light I saw yesterday in the eyes of an 'outfit' of engineers who have been five miles away from a hut, out there in the woods, when we started to build them a hut; I don't think that any of you ever kept the Sabbath in a holier way than you did to-day unloading those tents. That was keeping the Sabbath holy if ever you guys did it."

Somehow the "Count's" way of looking at it gave our day's work new dignity and put it on a high and holy plane.

"Why, last week when we drove into Gerards Sais with a truckload of stuff to put in a hut, a gang of fellows, about fifty of them, came running out of the woods and offered to help unload the stuff and build the hut for me," the "Count" continued. "I never saw a crowd so willing to help. 'Why,' they said, 'we haven't had a hut for nearly a year now and we've been here in this mudhole

STAR DUST FROM THE DUGOUTS

with nowhere to write and nowhere to sit down and nowhere to get together. Some of us have been walking five miles every evening just to get somewhere and see a light and a warm stove. That's how much we think of the "Y." One boy yelled, 'O go on away from here; I haven't got any money to buy peanuts!' The rest of that gang nearly killed him before I could tell them that we hadn't come to sell peanuts but to sell joy," the "Count" continued.

As we sat around the fire drying our clothes and oiling our boots for the next day's work, and some of us greasing our sore hands, the "Count" continued his evening discourse:

"And doesn't the book that you guys preach out of say something about giving 'a cup of cold water in my name'? Well, handing out a cup of hot chocolate or a cup of hot coffee to a lad going down into the trenches may not be just the right wording to fit that text, but I guess it's got pretty much the same spirit in it. It might just as well have read, 'Giving a cup of hot chocolate in my name.' That's what you fellows are doing every day

THE BREWERY GANG

of your lives as you boost those big, back-breaking boxes of chocolates from the car into the truck, and then from the truck into the warehouse, and then back into the truck, and then 'down the line,' and then into the huts; that's what you're doing every living day of your life here, giving a cup of hot chocolate in his name; the Lord bless you every one. When you guys go home you'll speak as you never spoke before, and the people will wonder what in thunder has come over you. What is it that your book says?—'As one having authority.' That's the way you'll speak. You'll be like the old colored fellow who explained what near beer was not; and since this is the 'Brewery Gang' to which I am speaking, I guess you'll all understand a story about beer."

We all laughed and waited, for whatever the "Count" said was worth listening to. He was a Lincoln in his sincere and homely philosophy; and reverent with it all.

"Well, somebody down in Virginia, after that State went dry, asked Rastus what the difference was between near beer and the real

STAR DUST FROM THE DUGOUTS

stuff. Rastus replied: 'Well, sah, its 'bout like dis. Dat dar near beer it look lak beer, it taste lak beer, it sparkle lak beer, but it jes' natu'lly don't have de authority, sah; it jes' don't have de authority.'

"But when you fellows go back you'll have the punch, the pep, and snap; you'll speak as 'one having authority.' There'll be a difference. You'll have known what it is to do hard physical labor for somebody else. You've known that it means to have your hands bleed and your body weary, and your eyes heavy with sleep; you've known what it means to suffer in your body and soul for somebody else—for those boys down there in the mud and snow of the trenches. I call that a man's work. I call that God's work too. And a lot of us guys who never went near a church before the war, when it's all over, we're going to go to hear you fellows preach.

"When you're preaching on that text, 'Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest,' you'll know what it means to have been weary and to have had need of rest; you'll know what it means to be

THE BREWERY GANG

weary until you feel that you can't last the day out, and your limbs yearn for rest. We who hear you preach will know then, when we hear you use that text, that you are not camouflaging. Then, when you preach us a labor sermon, like so many of you do—thank God, when we hear you, we'll know that you know what you're talking about. Then when you preach about 'service' we'll know that it's not all hot air; we'll know that you have actually suffered over here to serve other people. And, after all, aren't you at last doing just what your Christ did when he was alive? Sometimes maybe you fellows think that you don't get a chance to preach much over here in this work. Maybe you thought that was all that you were to do, and maybe you are disappointed down deep in your hearts that you are doing nothing but driving trucks or unloading freight or building huts here in the pioneer division. Well, from my reading of the Book, as I remember it—if I'm mistaken tell me, you guys—as I remember it, Christ spent more time serving people, making them comfortable in their bodies, healing their

STAR DUST FROM THE DUGOUTS

wounds, giving them food to eat, curing their blind eyes, and healing leprous bodies, than he did in preaching, didn't he?"

There was a nod of assent from that crowd of preacher truck-drivers. New light was beginning to dawn in their souls as they remembered the Christ, and somehow felt, in the face of the "Count's" homely religious philosophy, that, after all, they were having a chance to serve as the Christ had served with bleeding hands and feet.

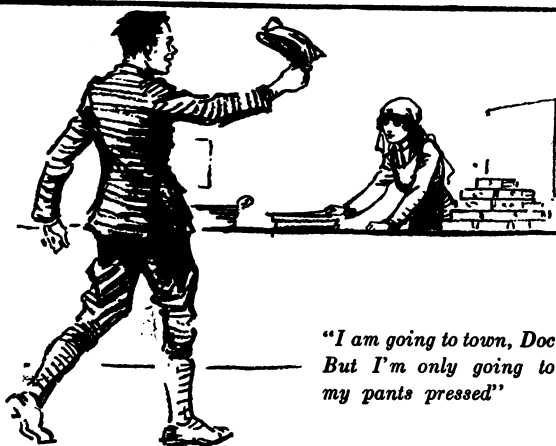
"You fellows handled a lot of 'duck boards' to-day in unloading that car. Did you ever stop to think that over those 'duck boards,' over those floorings for the huts, thousands of American boys will walk to the only light and heat and comfort that they will know down front; that thousands of American boys will walk over those boards going down into the trenches, and hundreds of them into eternity?"

Then he was subdued a moment as the face of his own boy came before him: "And I tell you, men, when you have a boy of your own down the line, and you think that maybe he will walk over those 'duck boards' that you

THE BREWERY GANG

guys handled to-day, it makes you want to thank God for the opportunity of working, working until your hands bleed, and you are weary with exhaustion, in their service. I know what war means," he continued. "Anybody who has a boy in it knows. It means loneliness, homesickness, heartbreak, heartache, hatred, hurt, rain, pain, wounds, suffering, death, fatherless children, childless fathers and mothers, sad eyes, murder, and death. But it means something else, men—it means that some of us are having the first opportunity of our lives to live as Christ lived and to do his work in a very real and vital manner. That's a man's job. That's God's job too."

And I add that the thing that won the hearts of the boys in France, the willingness to serve, will win their hearts for the church and for the Master over here as they come home.



*"I am going to town, Doc. . . .
But I'm only going to get
my pants pressed"*

CHAPTER VII

THE BIG BROTHER OF THE KHAKI

THE SOLDIER — HIS REAL ATTITUDE TOWARD THE Y. M. C. A. DURING THE WAR

I HAVE tried in this book up to this time to show the soldier in his attitude toward the preacher, the personal representative of the church in France; in his attitude toward the sermon, an institution of the church service; in his attitude toward prayer; in his attitude toward the social service spirit of the church. Now I shall introduce a chapter showing his attitude toward the Y. M. C. A., the one out-

THE BIG BROTHER OF THE KHAKI

standing organized representative of the Church of the Christ in France.

For be it remembered that this organization has the very name of "Christian" in it. It makes no attempt to camouflage that connection. The leaders of the Y. M. C. A. have, from the beginning of its war work, insisted upon the fact that the organization was nothing other than a branch of the church. They have taught the soldiers that it was born in an evangelistic service, and that it has always been an arm of the church.

And be it also remembered that the boys in France have accepted, with all their hearts, this religious organization; and have entered its doors and made it their home. They have said in word, act, and letter, "We believe in this arm of the church."

To understand this and to use this new attitude toward this arm of the church is our task and our great privilege and our tremendous hope.

In spite of the unjust criticisms, after the war the big brother of the khakis was the Y. M. C. A. secretary. Thoughtful officers and men will

STAR DUST FROM THE DUGOUTS

admit it. He has been crowned in the new democracy by the English Tommy, the American Yank, the French Poilu, and the Canadian and Australian from over the seas. He has not sought the crown. In fact, he has avoided it. He has gone out of his way to dodge it. But it has been forced upon him.

He had been given permission to eat with the officers' mess, but he deliberately chose, nine times out of ten, to mess with the common soldier. He turned down the shoulder straps, the commission and the Sam Brown belt for the same reason when it was offered to him. He wanted no barrier between himself and the man he went to serve. The officers understood this, and respected him for it. The soldier who understood it, loved him for it.

I have heard of one college president who went into a little outpost for work in the Y. M. C. A. The secretary who had charge there did not know that the new man was a college president back home, and the new man did not advertise the fact. When it came dinner time the first day the new man asked where he should eat. The secretary in charge said,

THE BIG BROTHER OF THE KHAKI

"O, just follow some of the men in, and mess with them. Make arrangements with them."

So the college president followed the first crowd he saw, and ate with them. He admits now that he didn't exactly like the food. In fact, it was pretty hard on him, but he was game. The men were dressed a little differently from what he had expected soldiers to be. They had on white suits, and some of them ate in their shirt sleeves. They appeared to be a sullen gang. Neither fellow on either side of him spoke a word to him for three days.

On the evening of the third day he discovered that he had been eating at the prisoners' mess. On that first day he had followed instructions, and had fallen in with the first crowd he saw. That crowd was a gang of German prisoners.

Then the secretary who told me this story added, "But it made him with that camp; the very fact that he, a college president, had been game enough to do this and stick it out without a word of complaint." Such democracy

STAR DUST FROM THE DUGOUTS

as this is what made the soldier "dub" the "Y" secretary the "Big Brother of the Khaki."

Then there was the New York business man who came over from his easy life, with its limousines, secretaries, stenographers, and a luxurious home on Riverside Drive, who settled down in the mud under a leaky roof, enduring the hardships with his own men, working in a three-by-four room, his only equipment a store box for a table, a smaller store box for a seat, a candle for light, and not one single thing besides.

He so entertained, and so brothered, and so loved his way into the hearts of his regiment of boys that one time, when he came to be discouraged because he did not get additional equipment from Paris, and had gone in to resign and go home, but was persuaded to go back to his little hut, on his arrival back in that hut he was welcomed by his entire regiment with cheers and handshakes and shouts of joy. He had been winning their hearts in his little hencoop of a hut without knowing.

Then there was that other New York business man, who had never endured a hardship

THE BIG BROTHER OF THE KHAKI

in all his life, and who, after living with his boys for a long time, wrote to headquarters, saying: "I've never been so cold, or so wet, or so happy in my life. I have found my fellow man. I have found myself. I have found my God. In middle life I have been reborn."

And that boy in one of the camps whose heart had been won by one of the girl canteen workers. She was an M.D. back home, and the men knew it.

The men soon got to knowing how much the women workers disliked having them go to the towns on leave, for it was there that the bad women were, and the wine, and the moral danger. So these mischievous American lads like to tease the women workers.

One day this boy came along, with a twinkle in his eye, and yelled, "I'm going to town, Doctor." She looked disappointed. He laughed, and then added, "But I'm only going to get my pants pressed, Doc!"

She laughed with relief, but called after him, "To prove it, you report to me when you get back. Will you?"

"Yes," he flung back with a grin.

STAR DUST FROM THE DUGOUTS

An hour or two later the lad came sailing through the canteen where the woman worker was busy, saluted her, and said, "Everything's O. K., Doc. Good-night!"

Surely, if the men Y. M. C. A. workers were called the "Big Brothers of the Khaki," the women workers must be called "Big Sisters in Khaki."

One is reminded of Hugo's "Quatrevingt-treize," that dialogue in which Cimordain and Gauvain discuss the new republic, and Cimordain says, "And in this new republic the man shall be the king."

"On one condition," said Gauvain.

"And what is that?"

"That the woman shall be the queen!"

Yes, the woman worker in the Y. M. C. A. was queen over there. When we landed at a certain port in France with our little band of American girls, a group of soldiers saw us and came rushing over and up to the girls with their hats off. "American girls! Say, you look good to us. We haven't seen an American girl in two months! May we talk with you while you wait for your train?"

THE BIG BROTHER OF THE KHAKI

One girl was to go to a cantonment in southern France, where she was the only girl among thousands of American soldiers. They had been there for six months without an American woman in sight. Was she to be a queen? One guess is enough.

My friend Dr. A. E. Enyart had two striking experiences illustrative of the title of this sketch. One was in a theater in Paris. An American boy sat drinking with a harlot.

Secretary Enyart saw him, and motioned for him to come over to where he was standing.

They got to talking, and the boy asked him to change \$70 in American money into French money.

Mr. Enyart said, "No, I won't, for if I did, that girl would get it all before morning, and you probably have a wife or a mother back there at home, who is a thousand times more entitled to it than she is."

The boy went away, angry at first, but five minutes later my friend was surprised to see the lad at his side again. He didn't say much.

He reached out the seventy dollars to the Y. M. C. A. secretary, gave his mother's ad-

STAR DUST FROM THE DUGOUTS

dress in America, and said, "You are right. Send it to her," and disappeared before the secretary had a chance to get either his name or company address.

Mr. Enyart sent the money, and has a receipt for it from the American Express Company, but has never been able to locate the boy.

The remarkable thing about this story to me is the fact that the soldier absolutely trusted that Y. M. C. A. uniform, so much so, in fact, that he handed his money over, with his mother's address, to a "Y" man whom he had never seen before, and left without even suggesting that he be given a receipt for his money.

His other experience was with a French official. Mr. Enyart had been in charge of several Y. M. C. A. hotels in Paris. He was purchasing agent also for all the Y. M. C. A. work in this city.

The securing of coal was one of his hardest problems. He found that to get coal at all he must first visit a certain official and have tea with him. This social preliminary would last half of an afternoon, and the ordeal had to be repeated frequently.

THE BIG BROTHER OF THE KHAKI

Then, after the social preliminaries were all over, Mr. Enyart found that he was always told to go home and write a letter. He had previously written this letter on the stationery of the hotel, thinking that it was more impressive.

But this particular time he was in a hurry, and, knowing the ropes, he went prepared with the letter already written on Y. M. C. A. stationery. After the social preliminary of a half afternoon was over, and he was being dismissed with a request to go home and write a letter, he remarked, "Here is a letter, monsieur."

The official took the letter. His face began to light up with a new comprehension. Heretofore Mr. Enyart had not seemed to make the man understand what the Y. M. C. A. stood for. He could not separate it from the army.

But here was something that he understood. It was the red triangle on that stationery. His face beamed as he looked up.

"Ah, oui!" he exclaimed. "Oui, oui, oui, oui! You give my boy chocolate when he sick at the war. I give you coal!"

STAR DUST FROM THE DUGOUTS

One night I was walking along the crowded streets of a certain port of entry, St. Navaire. Suddenly three American soldiers staggered up to me and said: "Shay, you're a Y. M. C. A. guy, and you're all we got. You gotta take care of us. Honest, we couldn't help gettin' drunk. We've been in hoshpital two months, and got leave——"

"Yes, and I see you got something else besides 'leave,'" I said to him.

"Jush take us to hotel anywhere; we got money."

And I took them—three of them, so drunk that I had to half carry them. This was my first personal experience with a drunken soldier in France; I had seen only a few of them, but they needed my help.

I took them to the hotel, with the help of my friend Senator Benson of California, vouched for them and, after undressing them, washed them and put them to bed.

The fact that there has been more or less criticism of the Y. M. C. A. from certain sources since the armistice was signed and the boys have been coming home makes this chap-

THE BIG BROTHER OF THE KHAKI

ter all the more worth while to the men and women of the church. Let not Christ's people be stampeded into believing all this adverse talk. It has its well-defined source. Every definite criticism is answerable.

The American soldier is about as "Billy" Levere said he was. "Billy" was a secretary in France. In speaking to the soldiers in the camps he always used this introduction, lisping as he spoke:

"There are three things that I have always noticed about a soldier. First, he ith always broke; second, he ith always hungry; third, wherever he ith he wishes to God he wath thome place else."

From this spirit comes much of the kicking against the Y. M. C. A. But the end will vindicate that great arm of the church in its work in France. When history writes its ultimate page for the "Y" it will be a page unspotted because of its unselfish service as an institution of Christ. Such service as it rendered cannot die. The vast majority of boys will never be able to forget that it served them in their dire distress. The few who

STAR DUST FROM THE DUGOUTS

are criticizing now represent a small number.

Men who, although in the church, have been swayed by the storm of criticism, may have their faith renewed in some of the incidents that follow showing the love that the boys have for the Y. M. C. A. in France and their attitude toward this Christian institution.

While I was putting the drunken boys to bed I got their story. All three of them had been wounded in the last drive near Soisson. One was a sergeant, and the other two boys referred everything to him.

One lad tried to tell me what they thought of the Y. M. C. A. He started off with enthusiasm: "W're goin' lick the Germans, and the Y. M. Shay's going to help us! We're goin' to drive the Germans into Berlin, and the Y. M. Shay—is——"

But that pronunciation of the letters Y. M. C. A. was too much for his tongue, so he waved his hand to the sergeant, and said, "Sergeant, you tell them what we think of the Y. M. Shay; I can't."

Then he forgot his linguistic failings and

THE BIG BROTHER OF THE KHAKI

started again telling me about how the Y. M. C. A. had given them chocolate and had followed them into the Somme line, but before he had half finished he got discouraged and turning to the sergeant said, again, "Sergeant, you tell them what Y. M. Shay did."

Three times he started out on his eulogy of the Y. M. C. A. The last time about how the Y. M. C. A. man had brought him in from the field on a truck; but here too he had to fall back on the sergeant and he said, "Sergeant—Sergeant, you tell them how much we think of the Y. M. Shay."

But the sergeant was asleep, and so I never did hear what the boys thought of the Y. M. C. A., save when the last one to stay awake called me over and said, "Here's nine hundred francs; take them and keep them for me until to-morrow."

I took the money and said, "I'll give you a receipt for it."

"Don't want any receipt. You're Y. M. Shay; that's enough for me. You're Y. M. Shay. Don't want any receipt."

"Well, I'll just mark it down here how much

STAR DUST FROM THE DUGOUTS

I've got anyhow," I replied. That insulted him.

"Don't want any receipt; don't want any marks; Y. M. Shay is all right; can't insult Y. M. Shay in my presence, without a fight"—and he attempted to get out of bed to avenge the insult I had offered to the Y. M. C. A.

Drunk as they were, they trusted a perfect stranger, because he had on a "Y" uniform.

Another night I picked up a drunken boy who was lying in a pool of water. He was afraid I was an M. P., and protested against going with me.

I said, "I'm a Y. M. C. A. secretary, and I'm going to take you to my room and wash you up and keep you all night, so you can report to duty looking like a man instead of a pig." He was then satisfied and said, "Let me feel your cap; I'll know then."

I let him feel my cap and he felt the red triangle and was satisfied for a time, but just as I was taking him into my office he got nervous again. There was a dim light burning on my office door. He looked at it and was

THE BIG BROTHER OF THE KHAKI

sure that I was an M. P., and was taking him to headquarters.

He wouldn't go in until he had read what it said on the door. He spelled the letters out word by word like a little child: "R-E-L-I-G-I-O-U-S D-I-R-E-C-T-O-R." Then he turned to me and said, staggering as he spoke, "Shay, maybe you don't know it, but you're doing pretty good piece of religious work now, old man; pretty good piece of religious work."

Stories like these and experiences like these make one dismiss with a smile the petty criticisms about inefficient canteen work, for we know that down deep in the human heart the organization will be judged by its greater service; its service to the souls of men; and it was this greater service that made the vast majority of boys in France not only accept it as their own club and home, but accept it with a complete abandonment of eagerness that warms our hearts as we who saw it remember it. The preacher who can see back of the criticisms the realities; who knows that these ungrateful words do not represent the spirit of the great majority of soldiers, will not approach

STAR DUST FROM THE DUGOUTS

the average boy with any feeling of chagrin for this arm of the church that became the “**Big Brother of the Khaki**” in France through sheer merit in serving.

*"You bet your life
they read it!"*



CHAPTER VIII

THE BOOK AND THE BOY

THE SOLDIER—HIS ATTITUDE TOWARD THE BIBLE

WHAT has been the boy's attitude toward the Bible? Has he been indifferent to it? Has he scorned it as he might have done at home many times? Has he treated it as a book for "children and missionaries and old ladies"? Has he felt ashamed at the thought of being found dead with one in his pocket? Has he been ashamed for the folks at home to know that he carries one into the trenches

STAR DUST FROM THE DUGOUTS

with him, and ashamed for them to know that he read it every day?

A complete understanding of his attitude toward the Book will help us to understand him better as he comes back. It will help us to meet him more than half way. We will not have to talk about his new attitude, for that would be the most foolish thing imaginable to do. We shall not be afraid of him when we know. The knowledge that this chapter gives us shall make us bold as we approach him. This knowledge shall make us feel that we can "pal" up to him.

To know that he read the Bible, and that he carried it around with him, and that he pasted his mother's picture in it, and that the Bible that he carried through the war is as valuable a souvenir as the Boche helmet that he captured; to know that he not only read it but that he is willing to boast of having read it; to know that he has it marked up with turned-down leaves and pencil dashes—all this will make us brave as lions in our own hearts when we meet him. That is the

THE BOOK AND THE BOY

purpose of this chapter and, in whole, that is the purpose of this book.

There have never been enough Bibles in France to supply the demand for them. I have gone into the Y. M. C. A. headquarters many times for New Testaments and have been told that none were available. I am not telling this truth to criticize the Y. M. C. A., for it had done its best to get Bibles enough to supply the demand, but shipping facilities had made that impossible. As it was, the "Y" had shipped to France and had given away literally millions of New Testaments. But that did not keep up with the demand. On the other hand, I am telling it to illustrate the thrilling truth that the boys were so eager to have a Bible or a New Testament with them that the demand was greater than the supply.

I was the religious director of a large port of entry for two months, and I never could keep enough Testaments and Bibles on hand to supply the demand for them. We hoarded Bibles like we hoarded sweets at times. We had a rule that when the supply of sweets was

STAR DUST FROM THE DUGOUTS

low, only so much was to go to a man. Especially was this true down near the front lines when it was almost impossible at times to get supplies up to the men. Here the rule was as absolute as the law of the Medes and Persians that only a certain amount went to a man. In some cases it was necessary for one secretary to confine his selling activities to men of a certain regiment, and when stragglers came in he had to say, "No, I can't sell to you, for you don't belong to my regiment." It was too bad, but it had to be done. When the reader remembers that often there was but one secretary to ten thousand men he will understand the problem.

So we had to hoard our Bibles.

Growing desperate, I used to send over to England for Bibles. Out of ten lots that I ordered only six lots reached me. The rest were sunk by submarines. We had to do this because the Religious Department at the Y. M. C. A. headquarters in Paris could not keep up with the demand.

"Gimme a real, honest-to-God Bible," said a big fellow, marching into a hut one day.

THE BOOK AND THE BOY

We wondered what he meant by an "honest-to-God-Bible." The religious director of that hut slipped back to me and asked what I thought.

I said: "He means a Douay Version. He's a Catholic." For we were also supplying the Douay Version of the Bible by thousands to Catholic boys. I myself had supplied the Catholic chaplains with this version. They had none of their own and were overjoyed to receive them from the Y. M. C. A. religious director.

But this was not what the boy wanted.

I thought that perhaps he was a Jew and wanted a Jewish Bible, a supply of which we carried. No, it was not that.

I went out myself and the boy said, "You know—one of them 'Honest-to-God Bibles'; the kind that has it all in."

Then I caught on. He wanted a complete Bible with the New and Old Testament. Generally, in fact almost universally, we gave out only the New Testament. I do not know the reason for this, but it is a fact. You could hardly get a complete Bible from the Y. M.

STAR DUST FROM THE DUGOUTS

C. A.; and frequently secretaries had requests for the entire Bible.

The first contact that I had with the wonderful spreading of the Testaments over France was in an enlisted men's hotel, in Paris, the Pavilion. In every room there was a Testament for the boy as he came back to Paris from the front. One sat down there at meals with boys from every "outfit" in France. For breakfast it was a doughboy from Verdun who had just been in the trenches for three months. For lunch it was with a boy who had been shot to pieces at Gallipoli. For dinner it was in a group of Australians who had been in from the beginning through it all.

The first day that I arrived in this hotel there was a neat little New Testament left on my table in my room and a note telling me that it had been left there as a gift to me from the Y. M. C. A. I inquired if the boys generally took them back to the trenches with them, and those in charge of the hotel said, "We have never had a boy refuse a Khaki Testament in this hotel, and we have given out thousands."

THE BOOK AND THE BOY

Up front in the huts I heard some fascinating tales of the boy and the Book. In the first place, in the warehouses, side by side with the chocolate and the toothbrushes I saw the Bibles. They were being shipped out. An order would come in for "One box of chocolates, one box of petite biscuits; one box of toothbrushes; one hundred Testaments."

One Testament that I found had a couplet inside:

"This book will keep you from sin,
Or sin will keep you from this book."

The boys were challenged by that couplet. It was followed by a list of suggestive readings, and I have learned with a sigh of regret and joy that these suggestions were eagerly grasped at by the average boy, both because he knew so little of the Book and because he was so eager to know more about it. It was a common sight to see men come up to the secretary of a canteen, especially when they were going into the line, and beg him to mark their Bibles. Thousands of boys gladly signed the "Pocket Testament League pledge" which reads: "I

STAR DUST FROM THE DUGOUTS

hereby accept membership in the Pocket Testament League by making it the rule of my life to read at least one chapter in the Bible each day, and to carry a Bible or Testament with me wherever I go."

Some of the Testaments had various attractive features about them, but all of them went like the proverbial hot cakes. About the most popular thing that a man could have about his canteen was a Bible. Some of the Bibles had a hymn on one page, and on the other a "Decision" place and pledge.

The Testaments were not forced on the boys. They were piled up on every counter in every hut canteen. A sign was put up—"Take One," or "These Are For You," or just "Free." And when a pile was put up it melted like snow on a warm day. The supply was never as great as the demand, let the people at home remember. Every secretary was crying for more Testaments all the time. I have seen boys stand in line in huts when they heard that a new supply of Testaments was in, and I too, much to my own sorrow, have seen them go away disappointed without one.

THE BOOK AND THE BOY

Secretaries had their own ways of handing out the Testaments. One day a friend of mine, Mr. Shipp, associate general secretary in France, was approaching a new hut down in a woods where a lot of engineers were camping. He saw, long before he reached the hut, a line of men, like he had seen at the Polo Grounds in New York before a big ball game or at a theater. He thought that there must be something special that day and approached the hut eagerly. What he found astonished him.

The secretary was handing out New Testaments, but he was doing it in a new way. In each Testament he was putting his own name and address back in Cleveland, and side by side with his own name he was putting the name of the boy who received the Testament. Then he was taking down in his own notebook the lad's home address. The boys liked this secretary, and they wanted one of those Testaments with its personal touch. Consequently, to get a Bible they stood in line as they had done back home for baseball tickets.

Dr. Dan Poling was very deeply impressed with an experience that he had in a hut when

STAR DUST FROM THE DUGOUTS

he was down on our front line at Toul for a week on a tour of inspection. But the secretaries who worked day and night, and day after day, week after week, and month after month, especially in our front huts, had this experience every time a new bunch of boys went into the trenches.

Dr. Poling was standing one night reading his Testament. A company of "dough-boys" was going into the front line trenches to relieve some lads who had been in there for eight days. A boy saw him reading the Testament and bashfully walked up to him and said, "Say, mark this one of mine, will you?" As Dr. Poling took it the lad added, "Mark some good ones now, old top!"

It was the holy joy of a new experience to this good man. But, much to his Christian glee, when he had finished marking that one Testament, up came another lad with one saying, "Mark mine too, pal!" He finished that one when up came another lad, saying "Mine too, sir, please." And then another, and another, and another, until they were actually standing in line to have their Testa-

THE BOOK AND THE BOY

ments marked—that crowd of boys going into the trenches. Poling said that toward the last of that line he didn't know whether he was laughing or crying, and neither did the boys. And neither did I when he told me about it.

I asked him what he marked and he said, "O, Matthew—the fifth chapter; Matthew 10-18; 11-42; the 6th chapter, 19th and 20th verses; and old reliable John 3. 16; Romans 8. 35, 36, 37, 38, and 39; Matthew 28-30, and as many more as I could think of in the rush. I wish I'd had more time. They kept me jumping. I thought I knew the Bible, but those were precious moments, and every mark I knew counted. I never knew before how valuable it was to know just where to turn, for those lads had to go out into the night in five minutes."

"Did they read the Bible?" one who has been over there is asked by lip and letter.

"Did they read it?"

"Indeed they did!" is one answer, and "You bet your life they read it!" is another I have heard frequently from secretaries, who have seen them reading it in their billets, in the

STAR DUST FROM THE DUGOUTS

huts, in the trenches, in the hospitals, everywhere.

"A fellow likes to have the good passages marked when he's down there in the trenches, with eight days hanging on his hands, for he has a lot of time to read, and that book's interesting," one lad said to me one day.

Another boy after he had read the story of Christ exclaimed in true soldier language, with great fervidness, "That feller Christ that I read about in this book; all I gotta say is 'I'm for him.'"

Maybe some of our dear, delightful, "One-way-to-do-it" friends, "one-way-to-bend-the-knee-and-none-other-crowd," "one-way-to-crook-the-elbow-fraternity," "one-way-to-intone-the-prayer-and-one-alone" crowd, wouldn't call this "I'm for him" of the lad, a recruit to the Master. You see, he didn't sign any card, and he didn't kneel down anywhere, and he didn't grab my hand, and he didn't say, "I pledge this or that"; and he didn't cry, and he didn't laugh, and he didn't shout, and he didn't join anything. He just said, "I'm for him!" but I've never heard a declaration of

THE BOOK AND THE BOY

loyalty to the Christ anywhere within church walls that had quite the fervor or that meant quite so much as that from that lad under the canvas walls of a Y. M. C. A. hut in France. And the light in his eyes was like the breaking of a new day along the hills.

Yes, our boys read the book. They had a lot of time in the trenches, and in the billets and in the camps, and they read everything in sight. They liked the Testament too. They kept their copies in their pockets, especially if they were marked by some personal touch of somebody back home or a secretary or a chaplain.

If some of the wives or mothers or sweet-hearts who loved enough to give their lads Testaments with their names in them, could have seen how those books were treasured it would have warmed their hearts as the summer sun warms a rosebud and brings out all the glorious perfume there is in it. I think the richest perfume I ever smelled, such that it intoxicated me with its witchery, was a great American Beauty down in Pasadena which had been warmed all morning by the summer

STAR DUST FROM THE DUGOUTS

sun. And so your women hearts would scent the world with happiness if you could see your pictures pasted in these Testaments as I have seen them, pasted just down below where you signed your names in them, or if you could see written as I have "To be sent to——," with the home address of some loved one. Or if you could hear a boy say, as one said to me, showing me a soiled, dirty Testament: "That's been in the trenches three times. It's been across the Atlantic. It's been in Paris. It's been at the Argonne. It's been in England. It's been under shell fire dozens of times. It's been in gas attacks. It's been everywhere that I've been, and, by heck, it's going to keep on going right with me wherever I go. I read it every day sometimes. Maybe it's at night; maybe it's in the morning just before mess if it's light enough. I've read it by the light of a new day. I've read it by the light of a candle in a dugout when the Boche was bombin' us. I've read it in a Paris hotel sittin' comfy-like in a big leather chair, with electric lights overhead. I've read it by the light of matches in an open field in training quarters. I've

THE BOOK AND THE BOY

read it by flashing my Ever-Ready on it in a listin' post. I've read it by moonlight. I've read it on trains. I've read it on boats. I've read it on rumblin' trucks."

He paused for a few minutes feeling that book with his hand, patting it tenderly as he would his dog or pet as a boy (and he was after all only a boy); then he finished with this statement: "And when this darned war is over that little old Testament is goin' back home with me, and I'm goin' to give it to her!"

Just then duty called me. I never did learn who "her" was. I am sure that he would have told me had I waited, but I could not wait at that time. But that boy's enthusiasm for that book which had been with him through everything hovered around me as a holy light for days.

"Her" may have meant his mother, who gave it to him the last thing as she tried to hide the tears at the train or the boat. "Her" may have meant his sister. "Her" may have meant his wife. "Her" may have meant his sweetheart, and thank God for the thousands of sweethearts who sent boys to France with

STAR DUST FROM THE DUGOUTS

Bibles in their pockets, one of their most treasured possessions.

But standing out above all of one's various experiences in France is the great fact that the boys have been reading the Bible. They have read it naturally and simply. They have not been ashamed to be seen reading it. No man ever had a shoe shied at him, as Tom Brown did when he prayed—not in France in the American army. It was not considered an unusual thing for a boy to be sitting on his bunk or standing in a trench reading the Bible.

I do not mean to say that the American soldier was a psalm-singing piece of piety. Never! But I do mean to say that he had a warm, friendly, *comraderie*, human, natural, unaffected man-interest in the book.

I think that knowledge of this truth will help us to understand him as he comes back to us.

*"I knew you'd
come, Tom!"*



CHAPTER IX

"I'M FOR HIM!"

THE SOLDIER—HIS ATTITUDE TOWARD THE MASTER

THE boys have believed in Christ. They have accepted him as their friend and a fellow crusader. If you asked them to state it this way they would never do so, but to get anything like a complete understanding of the boy who has been in France you must know that he has accepted the Christ. It may have been such an expression as the boy made in the last chapter, "I'm for him," but it was definite.

STAR DUST FROM THE DUGOUTS

He may not have accepted him in any formal way. He may never have signed a card. He may never have stood in a meeting. He may never have said to a living soul that he has accepted Christ, but down deep in his own living, vital, throbbing soul he has seen that the Christ was a man and that the Christ was more than that; that he was divine; and he has accepted him.

I think that it is Donald Hankey who heard a Tommy say, "We don't know much about the church, but we do know the Christ."

I refer the reader to the story of the boy with whom I talked in the tent; the boy who was reading the story of Gethsemane and reading it in the light of his own experiences; the boy who had come by the route not only of a crude reasoning but also of a vital experience to an understanding and an acceptance of the Christ as comrade and friend and Saviour.

Dr. Merle Smith, pastor of the First Methodist Episcopal Church of Pasadena, confirms my experience with the boys, and that is, that they are not so much interested in a human Christ either as they are interested in a living,

“T’M FOR HIM!”

vital, mystic Christ. I mean by this that the old story of Christ the carpenter, Christ the man who was supremely human, Christ the man who lived as we live and suffered as we suffer, did not make such a great appeal as did the mystic Christ.

Dr. Smith tells of one night when he was addressing a crowd of boys down near the front lines. He was emphasizing the human Christ. I think most of us felt that that was the best approach when we first went to France. Perhaps we may be forgiven our lack of insight into this tremendous situation at first flush. We were so eagerly anxious to get into the boy's heart and to get him to knowing our Christ that we made the approach through the human Christ.

But I presume it was that the boys had seen how feeble and frail humanity was—even well-trained officers, even old army men—in the face of a terrific barrage. They had seen the weakness of the human. They had seen that there must be something higher and stronger and more eternal than the human. So they had come to know that the kind of

STAR DUST FROM THE DUGOUTS

a Christ that they needed was not a human Christ but a divine Christ; a Christ who was not touched by bullets and shells; a Christ that physical limitation did not hamper, a Christ who could walk with them and talk with them amid the rain and hail of machine-gun fire and rifle bullets and bursting shrapnel.

It is for this reason that stories like "The Comrade in White" grew up about the war; stories a thousand times more real than shells and guns. It is for this reason, or, rather, in answer to this need that "The Christ of Flanders" was perhaps the most popular war poem not only to the folks at home but also to the men in the field. And this poem, as we all know, is full of a beautiful mysticism. Indeed, as one who follows the new poetry carefully says, "All the war poetry was mystic poetry. You cannot name me a great war poem that dealt with Christ as just the human Christ."

I had to admit that he was right.

So Dr. Smith was preaching to them about the humanness of Christ, the carpenter Christ, when he noticed a listlessness on the part of

"I'M FOR HIM!"

the men and he felt that he was not "putting it over," as he says in the language of the boys. Then he suddenly switched to a story and a quoting of "Christ in Flanders." There was a sudden quickening in interest. It was as if an electrical wave had swept over that crowd of boys. They sat up on the benches. Those who were writing letters stopped writing and began to listen to the story of this mystic Christ who could be, not in earthly form, but in spiritual form, with them and among them. What they wanted and what they needed was a mystic Christ, a mystic Christ who was not encumbered with human limitations, a Christ who could walk with them out in No Man's Land, where no human being could come, where not even the most fearless stretcher-bearer or surgeon dared go. The mystic Christ was there; men saw him; men felt his hand on their brows; men heard him speak to them; and you could never make them believe otherwise. *They expected him and he came.*

Association Men tells the story of a boy who was wounded and who lay out in No Man's

STAR DUST FROM THE DUGOUTS

Land. His own brother was in the trenches, and, knowing of this casualty, begged his captain for the privilege of crawling out into No Man's Land to his brother, but the captain refused.

"It would mean certain death. You could never reach him alive, much less do him any good. It would only mean that in addition to losing him I would lose you also. I cannot let you go."

But the boy pleaded, and finally the captain, who was human and who had a brother of his own, permitted the lad to go out to his own brother.

The lad crawled cautiously over the top of the trench. Then he worked his way from shell-hole to shell-hole toward his wounded brother. It was a terrible task. His friends watched him every minute. They expected to see his body blown to pieces with a shell. Sometimes he lay for a half an hour in a shell hole before he could proceed. Several times the Germans spotted him, and hundreds of rifle bullets whined over his head.

At last he crawled down into the hole where

“I’M FOR HIM!”

his brother lay. He remained there for an hour and then laboriously crawled back and reported to his captain.

“Well, what was the use of you’re going? You found him dead as I expected.”

“No, I didn’t, sir; he was alive. I poured water down his throat. He was unconscious when I crawled down into the shellhole, but when I poured the water into his throat he opened his eyes, sir, and he said, ‘It’s Tom; I knew you’d come, Tom!’ ”

And so wherever they were—out in No Man’s Land, buried in a dugout, or under a mass of ruins, they wanted a Christ that could come to them. They wanted a Christ who was not limited by human weaknesses of body or blood. They wanted a Christ and they believed in a Christ and they accepted a Christ, who walked at night among the wounded out in No Man’s Land, and this kind of a Christ they found walking there, and this kind of a Christ they believed in and talked with and prayed to with all their souls. And when they come back, as they are now doing, they will be men who have walked with such a Christ.

STAR DUST FROM THE DUGOUTS

Dr. Merle Smith also called my attention to the name the boys used for the Master. They called Him "The Saviour."

"It was like a blow in the face to me," said this great clergyman. "It made me suddenly aware of the fact that I had not been using that name for my Master much in my preaching. But from that day to this that phrase, 'The Saviour', has come back into my preaching vocabulary. The boys taught me that."

To fully understand the soldier the preacher must know this. He must know that the kind of a Christ in whom they believed was a mystic Christ. And in Him they believed as few men who have not walked close to the mouth of hell can believe.

If such a Christ be presented to them, the preacher will find an atmosphere of acceptance and sympathy. Let this be remembered in the reconstruction days that are now upon us.

In "Out To Win," one of Coningsby Dawson's latest books, I quote a couplet which about expresses the kind of a Christ in whom the boys believed in France:

“I’M FOR HIM!”

“I hear and to myself I say,
‘Why, Christ walks with me every day.’”

The one theme to which boys would always listen was that of the Christ. They frankly didn’t want and wouldn’t listen to a theological discussion on the doctrines. They did not want a lecture when they were expecting a sermon. They kicked about this to the secretaries. When a man came to them on Sunday from whom they had a right to expect a sermon, if they didn’t get it, they felt as folks who came for bread and had been given stones and, like the true Americans that they were, they entered a protest. A few experiences like this made any new speaker see that he needn’t be afraid to preach Christ to these American boys. That was what they expected; that was what they wanted most of all in their sermons; that was the one theme that would hold them fascinated. Wise speakers soon found this out.

No reconstruction effort is complete that does not have back of it the consciousness that this has been the attitude of the boy toward the Christ. It has not only been an attitude

STAR DUST FROM THE DUGOUTS

of an acceptance of the historical Christ, and an acceptance of the humanitarian Christ, but it has been more than that; it has been the attitude of a comradeship with the mystic, the eternal, the spiritual Christ. He has not only accepted this mystic Christ, but he has taken him into the most secret place of his innermost soul and has called him "Comrade." He has realized not only his oneness with Christ, but he has realized through that Christ his oneness with the Father.

One need not hesitate to preach Christ to this boy when he comes back into the churches. One must remember that he does not want his preaching about Christ diluted. In his own words, he "wants his preaching straight." He doesn't want any lectures. He doesn't want to be entertained. He wants his old friend of France, the Saviour.

Drive Christ out of the church, and you drive the boy out; welcome Christ, and you welcome the boy.



*"On a tree such as this
Jesus was crucified"*

CHAPTER X

THE NEW CALVARY

THE SOLDIER—HIS ATTITUDE TOWARD THE CROSS

THE authors quoted in this chapter have been men who have been in intimate contact with what might be called the souls of the soldiers. They are men who have either been on the battlefields of France or who have had loved ones there, and in two instances they are men who have lost sons. They are thoughtful men who have delved into the depths of the thing, and it is thrilling to see that, from the hearts of these thinking men, who are

STAR DUST FROM THE DUGOUTS

interpreting in turn the hearts of the soldiers, contemporary war literature is, consciously or unconsciously, interpreting the great world conflict in terms of a new Calvary. One will find this note in the almost innumerable books which have been written by soldiers from the trenches; men who have never in all their lives before given Jesus Christ a loyal thought, but who feel a real comradeship with the Master now, and who have come to understand, in their fullest meaning, both Gethsemane and Calvary. The books of their experiences have been pouring in upon us, and we have been reading them with the utmost eagerness, for we have learned by reading several books which have come out of the trenches, from the pens of men who never before thought to write, that these erstwhile thoughtless, playing, careless, laughing boys have come to marvelous articulation because of their experiences. And in most of these books one finds the note of Calvary struck, a note which finds immediate response and understanding in the hearts of millions of readers because they too have passed through their own sufferings.

THE NEW CALVARY

Somehow, in a strangely unanimous fashion, every thoughtful writer who, through prose or poetry, attempts to interpret the war turns at last to Golgotha. They do not all use the orthodox phraseology, but they cannot get away from that interpretation. Read a hundred books that have actually come out of the blood, the glare, the flare, the heat, the hurt, the hate, the sorrow and suffering of the war, and in more than half of these books, selected at random, you will hear the note of a tragic and yet a triumphant Calvary struck continually.

Coningsby Dawson defines the war in these terms in "Carry On," that remarkable series of personal letters which he wrote home. In one which he wrote to his mother he makes it clear not only that he believes that those who remained at home, especially the women, were bearing the harder cross, but he also makes it clear in striking phraseology that he too is interpreting the war in the light of the crucifixion, and he writes to his mother these lines:

"We have been carried up to the Calvary of the world, where it is expedient that some men should

STAR DUST FROM THE DUGOUTS

suffer that the generation to come may be better. Your end of the business is the worse. For me, I can go forward steadily because of the greatness of the glory. I never thought to have the chance to suffer in my body for other men."

One of the most vivid illustrations of how war literature, most of which is written by the soldier himself, is expressing the war in terms of Calvary is found in a description of the battle of Ypres. The writer, Dr. A. D. Enyart, dean of Rollins College for many years, was an eyewitness of this great battle, and his description of it has been copied far and near. He says:

"For miles around there was not a spot as large as a bucket that had not been shelled, and when I arrived just back of the batteries it was a barren waste as far as we could see. Intense bombardment had been kept up all night, and when I say bombardment it does not describe it at all adequately. All the hells of Dante and Milton and Faust and the Bible fade into insignificance compared with this. I walked beside the big guns; heard the short, sharp firing commands: 'No. 1, fire; No. 2, fire; Nos. 3, 4, 5, 6, fire ten rounds'; and as each order

THE NEW CALVARY

was given hell was let loose. Information was being continually sent down by wireless from scouting aeroplanes overhead, and following this information belching fire shot out of the mouths of the big guns. Now and then a shell from the Germans would break near enough to where we were standing to let us know that the battle was not all one-sided. Amid this continual roar I passed the night.

“At daybreak I was taken by an English officer to the brow of a hill overlooking a valley filled with a gray mist. It was cold, and I was chilled through to the bone. Suddenly he looked at his watch and said, ‘In just one minute, down there, the Tommies will go over the top.’ The words were hardly out of his mouth before the minute had passed and a deadly silence settled down over us. I wondered what that silence meant.

“The big guns had stopped to let the boys make their charge as per schedule. It was a silence like death. In that silence things around me attracted my attention that I had not noticed before. I peered through the fog across the hill where shell fire from the Germans had previously torn everything to bits, even great trunks of what had formerly been giant trees. But suddenly there loomed through the morning mists, high over that valley through which the Tommies were charging to their

STAR DUST FROM THE DUGOUTS

death, as though it were looking down from that hillside on the scene below and trying to define the significance of that valley of the Shadow, with its gaunt arms extended, appeared the limb of an old tree, broken by shell fire, which had so fallen that it was caught in the shape of a cross. As I looked at that crude cross I remembered that it was on a tree such as this that Jesus was crucified. It is also on a cross that they themselves have crudely made that the Germans are trying to crucify culture, kindness, art, decency, tenderness, faith, hope, love, civilization, freedom, and democracy. I thought of all this, and then I looked from that gaunt, rugged cross, looming through the mists of morning, amid that uncanny silence, down to the valley floor, and I said to myself, 'Those boys down there are going up the hill of Calvary.' I could not keep back the tears. Just then I did not know all that was going on down there and all that this Calvary was meaning to those boys, for the kindly gray mist hid the awfulness of that charge from my eyes. But I was soon to know

"I was to know when, a few hours later, I stood in a Y. M. C. A. dugout and watched the 'walking wounded' come in from that charge. I hesitate to describe what I saw, for my heart is sick at the memory of it. I cannot see the paper to write.

THE NEW CALVARY

One by one thousands of walking wounded passed me. I bowed my head at times. It seemed unbearable. They did not look like human beings. They were bloody, mangled masses of flesh; their clothes torn from their bodies by the barbed wire; some just able to crawl; all dragging themselves past the dugout to get their chocolate and tea. Then down the line came a wounded 'Tommy' with his pal on his shoulders. The Tommy had been shot through the cheek, an ugly wound where a bullet had gone through one cheek and out the other. He was a mass of blood, but he grinned and said: 'Aw, it didn't hurt. Both me arms and legs are good, and I can carry me pal, who has lost his legs.'

"Then as I stood I saw an English Tommy give up his place in the line to a wounded German prisoner. I saw another English Tommy light a cigarette and stick it in the lips of a German prisoner who could use neither of his own hands because they were both wounded. I thought of Christ's prayer for his enemies, for those who were crucifying him on Calvary, 'Father, forgive them; they know not what they do,' and I thought how true this was of the common German soldier. But as I watched this line of walking wounded file past, hour after hour that morning, I saw back of this line something else. I

STAR DUST FROM THE DUGOUTS

saw that gaunt old tree out of which the German shells had formed a cross; I saw it nakedly looming through the mists. All that day these scenes kept mingling and intermingling: that gaunt cross, the walking wounded, and the valley of that morning's charge, until the very lines of boys themselves seemed suddenly to form into the lines of a cross before my misty eyes. Then the meaning of all that I had seen dawned on me. It was Calvary all over again."

How vividly John Oxenham pictures it all in that scintillating book of poems, *The Vision Splendid*, when he tells the dramatic tale of "Jim Baxter." It is a ballad with a daring conception of a British Tommy who was actually nailed to a crude wooden cross by the Germans. Several English soldiers have been found nailed to crude crosses in captured German trenches. The Germans flagrantly denied and decried the tenderness and compassion of the Christ and ridiculed the nation that believes in all that the cross symbolizes. I do not use this quotation for the purpose of stirring up further hatred. That time has passed. Now it is our Christian task to forgive. I tell it only be-

THE NEW CALVARY

cause it is a vivid illustration of the attitude of a keen man's mind toward Calvary in reference to the war.

Jim Baxter is one of those soldiers who not only suffered spiritually the pangs of the cross, but he was actually nailed in his physical body to its beams. There had been a charge and Jim Baxter had stood, long after his comrades had fallen, fighting to the last bullet. Then when that bullet was gone he had still stood, swinging his big gun around him, knocking a half dozen Germans over as they closed in on him. He suddenly dropped unconscious. When he comes to he finds himself nailed to a cross and speaks:

“When Jim came to he found himself
Nailed to a cross of wood,
Just like the Christs you find out there
On every country road.

“He wondered dully if he'd died,
And so become a Christ;
'Perhaps,' thought he, 'all men are Christs
When they are crucified.'

STAR DUST FROM THE DUGOUTS

“His strength was ebbing with his blood,
His hands and feet were dead,
Fierce, biting pains shot through the nails
And blazed within his head.

“Below, a mob of jeering Huns
Mocked at his woeful plight.
They bade him loose himself and come
Down for another fight.

“But suddenly he raised his head,
His eyes shone clear and bright,
And opened wide—for at his side
Stood One clothed all in white.

“His face was wondrous pitiful,
But still more wondrous sweet;
And Jim saw holes just like his own
In His white hands and feet;

“But His look it was that won Jim’s heart,
It was so wondrous sweet.

“‘Christ’—said the dying man once more,
With accent reverent.
He had never said it so before,
But he knew now what Christ meant.”

THE NEW CALVARY

Linked closely with this definition and description of the war in vivid terms of a real human Calvary from a character of Jim Baxter's type comes the Donald Hankey type of college-bred, cultured, scholarly English lad. Those who have not read the two books *A Student in Arms*, by Donald Hankey, have not read the best of the war literature. All through both of these remarkable books Donald Hankey is ever conscious of "The New Calvary." In a hundred ways he expresses it. He expresses it in that marvelous chapter on the religion of Tommy, which he pictures as having become strangely and strongly articulate in the trenches for the first time in Tommy's life. He strikes this note in the expressions of his own religious experience. Hankey had been long searching for the Christ. When he did not find him in social service work in London he enlisted as a private, thinking to find him in the trenches with the common boys of England. And he was not disappointed, for he did find the Master. He found him through the brotherhood, the sacrifices, and the sufferings of his brave comrades. He found him

STAR DUST FROM THE DUGOUTS

through learning the willingness to live the experience that Christ set forth when he said, "Greater love hath no man than this, that he lay down his life for his fellow man." Donald Hankey found Christ a vital, vivid, warm, close, personal Saviour only when he lived and suffered in the trenches with his fellows.

Add to this the utterance of Dr. Gilbert Murry, of Oxford, a scholar who had taught such fine fellows as Hankey in their Oxford days; an older man, one who could not carry arms, cultured, poised, intellectual, cold, critical, but who also sees in this war, sees like a man reborn, the Calvary of it, and gives utterance to this thought in a thrilling paragraph of prose:

"As for me personally there is one thought that is always with me; better men, younger men, men with more hope in their lives, many of whom I have taught and loved, are dying out there for me. The orthodox Christian will be familiar with the thought of one who loved you dying for you. I would like to say I now seem to be familiar with the feeling that something innocent, something great, some-

THE NEW CALVARY

thing that loved me is dying, and dying daily for me."

I could refer to "The Comrade in White," "The Cross at the Front," by Tiplady, to Mary Shipman Andrews's "The Three Things," and to many other publications, every chapter of which literally breathes with the thought that the war was a new Calvary to the world, and that out of this Calvary even now there is dawning the light of the resurrection of a new morning for the world. What this new Calvary means to the soldier himself one writer tries to show us. First, it means that through this war the soldier has been reborn, just as the world is to be reborn. "Private Peat," author of one of the best books that have come out of the war, in *The American Magazine* of March, 1918, comes with a paragraph that has thrilled the great reading public of America as Harry Lauder's story thrilled it a short time ago. In expression of this thought, that the soldier is being reborn, Private Peat says, "I could tell of dozens of cases I have known personally of men who were literally born again in the trenches." "To be born

STAR DUST FROM THE DUGOUTS

again" will be a familiar phrase to the orthodox Christian, just as Dr. Murry intimates. But it is a stirring thing to hear the whole world using these significant Christian phrases in these tremendous days.

And Private Peat is not the only writer who knows that the boys have been new born, that they have found Christ and their Father, for John Oxenham in "The Vision Splendid," which he defines as "The Vision Splendid is the Cross Victorious," lets a boy speak for himself in answer to an interrogatory poem which he calls "What Did You See Out There, My Lad?" The question is asked in the first stanza of the poem:

"What did you see out there, my lad,
That has set that look in your eyes?
You went out a boy, you have come back a man,
With strange, new depths underneath your tan;
What was it you saw out there, my lad,
That set such deeps in your eyes?"

And the answer comes that he saw Christ and God:

"Strange things—and sad—and wonderful—

THE NEW CALVARY

Things that I scarce can tell—
I have been in the sweep of the Reaper's scythe—
With God—and Christ—and hell.

"I have seen Christ doing Christly deeds;
I have seen the devil at play;
.
I have seen the Godless pray."

Other verses follow, but these are enough
for our purposes, and then comes the answer
of the author to the lad who has seen Christ
and God; the answer that the lad had a right
to his high look:

"You've a right to your deep, high look, my lad,
You have met God in the ways;
And no man looks into His face
But he feels it all his days.
You've a right to your deep, high look, my lad,
And we thank Him for His grace."

Somehow the soldier has found his oneness
with God in the war. I have talked with
these lads face to face and have found that
this tremendous fact is true. It is not woven
of a poet's fancy. It is vitally, vividly, victori-
ously true. I have talked with lads coming

STAR DUST FROM THE DUGOUTS

in from the trenches and they had a superior look about them. It was almost unearthly. They had gone in boys, they had come out men; they had gone in rookies, they had come out veterans. Private Peat says in the fifth paragraph of his *American Magazine* article: "And suppose I didn't come back at all? I know I'd be smiling now—and I wouldn't be doing it in hell, either. That's what you don't realize, you who are here at home. You don't know how things get clear and plain to us in the trenches. Talk about finding yourself! We find more than ourselves. We find God."

If the reader doesn't find this strong enough to convince, let him turn to Oxenham's "The Leaves of the Golden Book," which he has written to console his own heart and the hearts of numberless readers who wonder what has become of their lads. Bishop McConnell says that as he walked through the "saddest road in Christendom," on the British front, with an English clergyman who was seeking the graves of several boys for their folks back home, he saw hundreds of graves

THE NEW CALVARY

in this desolate war-scarred field with a simple cross and the words, "An Unknown British Soldier." And here lies the terrible tragedy of war. To those who are bearing this cross at home come these lines like the touch of a mother hand on a fevered brow, comforting, consoling, soothing, especially when coupled with what Private Peat has said:

"God will gather all these scattered
Leaves into His Golden Book,
Torn and crumpled, soiled and battered,
He will heal them with a look.
Not one soul of them has perished;
No man ever yet forsook
Wife and home and all he cherished,
And God's purpose undertook,
But he met his full reward
In the 'Well done' of his Lord."

And to further strengthen and to further comfort, and to add the full measure of consolation, Oxenham gives us another word of hope in "Through the Valley":

"And there, of His radiant company,
Full many a one I see

STAR DUST FROM THE DUGOUTS

Who have won through the Valley of Shadows
To the larger liberty.
Even there, in the grace of the heavenly place,
It is joy to meet mine own,
And to know that not one but has valiantly won,
By the way of the Cross, his crown."

Then, like a challenge, literature puts it up to us as to what this sacrifice, what this suffering, what this cross must spur us to. It must spur us to the realization that these lads have died for us. Thoughtful men like Dr. Murry, of Oxford, see this, and we have heard him speak already. Oxenham adds his voice to this phase of our thinking:

"For us He died—
For you and me;
For us they died—
For you and me.
That love so great be justified,
And that Thy name be magnified,
Grant, Lord, that we
Full worthy be
Of these, our loved—our crucified!"

And here side by side with Christ this great poet puts the lads. Not side by side with him

THE NEW CALVARY

as the criminals were, but as brothers with him. And if Christ were willing to accept a thief into his fellowship on the cross simply because he believed, how eagerly and warmly he must welcome these lads who died as he died, for others, that the world might be better! How eagerly shall he welcome them!

In "The Fiery Cross," a new Oxenham book, this thought that, like Christ, some lad has died for us is briefly and wonderfully expressed

"Some man has died out there to-day
For you and me—
Died in heart-wracking agony, maybe,
For you and me."

And war literature dealing with the New Calvary makes us see that not only men, but the world, will be reborn out of this New Calvary. In "The New Earth" Oxenham has one outstanding stanza:

"Not since Christ died upon His lonely cross
Has time such prospect held of Life's new birth;
Not since the world of chaos first was born
Has man so clearly visaged hope of a new earth."

Yes, a new world is to arise after this our

STAR DUST FROM THE DUGOUTS

New Calvary; a new world is to arise out of the morning of the New World Resurrection. Let this final word from Oxenham in prose and a final word in verse sum it all up. The more practical, social, industrial rebirth he foreshadows in the Introduction to his book "The Vision Splendid": "If this fierce flame free us from the ruinous wastage of drink, from the cancer of immorality, from the shame of our housing-systems both in town and country, and bring about a fairer apportionment of the necessities of life—a living wage to all workers, leisure to enjoy, and opportunity to possess and progress—it will have done much. If it level the dividing walls, and result in a Pact of Nations which will insure peace for all time, it will have done very much. If it bring the world back to God, it will have done everything. This, our great sacrifice, will then be turned to everlasting gain."

The poem is taken from "The Fiery Cross":

"The wayward world has nailed itself

On its own cross of woe:

With its own hands it hewed the wood,

THE NEW CALVARY

It dyed the rood with its own blood,
And then, with vicious blow,
Drove home the nails that it had cast,
Through its own flesh, and made them fast;
It dug the pit below.

“But every cross new meaning holds
Since such sweet virtue came
Of Calvary; and though mankind
Still wanders graceless, deaf, and blind
To his own bitter shame,
Yet by God’s grace he shall arise
From this dread cross of sacrifice
To set all life aflame!”

And thus it is that the war has brought to the boy a new understanding of and a new attitude toward the cross of Calvary. He has faced it. It is his own vital, throbbing experience. He has been at one with Christ. He knows the cross to be something now besides a figure of speech.

When he comes back to our churches will he find those of us who are interpreting the cross interpreting it as if we know it to be a livid, vivid, burning force in life, or as if we believe it to be some far-off figure of speech,

STAR DUST FROM THE DUGOUTS

some beautiful mirage of the past, some theological figment of the church's imagination?

He will soon detect the difference. He will know whether the cross is a living fact in our lives and in our churches and in our sermons. He will soon know whether we believe it as he has come to believe it or whether we just preach it because it has been expected of us by the customs of the church.

Perhaps we who are the preachers, and we who are the church, and we who are the loved ones who were left at home, can only make the cross real to him as he returns, if we too have suffered; if we too have laid our bodies upon the cross itself; if we too have felt the nails, and the thorns, and the spear thrust in our sides. God help the church to preach the cross and to be willing to live the story of the cross, that we may win, not only the boy, but the world to all that it means for time and eternity.

*"This is no time
for formalities"*



CHAPTER XI

THE UNION SACRED

THE SOLDIER — HIS ATTITUDE TOWARD CHRISTIAN UNITY

SOME people were pleased and some people were not pleased when the idea of a United War Work Campaign was put up to the nation by the government. I think that the vast majority of the people of America were thrilled with the thought of Catholic, Protestant, Jew, working together for a great common cause. Whatever may have been the results that have arisen since, or the criticisms, I believe

STAR DUST FROM THE DUGOUTS

that just the common "folks" of America, the fathers and mothers of the boys, were lifted into the seventh heaven of a spiritual ecstasy in their giving.

One of my most spiritual laymen was present at a big preliminary meeting for this drive in San Francisco. At that meeting the President of the United Railways Corporation was present representing the Jews, another great business man was there representing the Catholic interests, and many representing the Y. M. C. A. He himself is a big business man and a man in big business, and he came home saying to me: "Why, it was like the spirit of an old-time Methodist revival meeting. Half of the time we wept together and half of the time we felt like shouting. We sang hymns and we prayed—Catholic, Jew, and Protestant. It was like being converted all over again!" And as he told me the story of that preliminary meeting for the War Work Campaign tears were in his eyes.

When he had finished I said, "Do you realize that the spirit of this great thing started in the camps of America and France?"

THE UNION SACRED

"No! How is that?"

"Why, it is because the men in the camps both in America and in France have forgotten that there ever was such a thing as church differences. I'll wager that there were not ten men in the average cantonment in America or in the average regiment in France who had any idea to which particular denomination their chaplains or their Y. M. C. A. secretaries belonged."

He was astonished at that statement.

Since then I have written and talked with a hundred chaplains and secretaries both from France and America, to see if their experiences confirm my observations in several American cantonments, added to six months in France; and I have never found a negative voice to this proposition.

The religious director of the Western Division of the Y. M. C. A. said to me: "Why, in all the camps with which I have had contact I doubt if the question ever occurred to a boy as to what denomination his chaplain or secretary belonged. It didn't make any difference to the boy."

STAR DUST FROM THE DUGOUTS

Personally, I worked in France for six months with hundreds of secretaries and chaplains. I knew intimately, as I count them over, at least a dozen chaplains, and a hundred religious work secretaries and preachers, and as I recall them I could not tell you the denominational connections of more than three about whom I did not already know before I went to France.

It simply was not considered. Whether a man was a Methodist, or a Presbyterian, or a Congregationalist was not taken into consideration by the organization itself, and it certainly would have been considered as a "supererogation" of information to the soldier. He didn't care what church the chaplain or the secretary was a preacher in before he went to the camps. This was true in both the camps at home and in the overseas work. I doubt if this statement will be denied by a single war worker who reads this book. I make it with supreme confidence.

This truth came to me in a peculiar incident with a suddenness that startled me after I had gotten home from France. While I was

THE UNION SACRED

in France this spirit of church unity was so much a matter of fact that one never thought of it. He worked with a chaplain or a secretary hand in hand, week after week, and he never concerned himself about the denomination in which his fellow worker was a minister. Many a time since I have come home have I said to myself: "I wonder what church that fine chap was a preacher in? I wish that I had asked him." The fellow to whom I refer and I worked on a truck for a solid month on the Toul line. I knew that he was a preacher, and he knew that I was. He was fifty, and I was fifteen years younger. We became close pals, but to this day I do not know to which church he ministers in peace times. I must write and find out.

The incident is this:

I had been raising what I called "A Big Brother Fund." A thousand dollars had swept into it in two months' time. It was to go to boys in France who were stranded financially. It was understood that I would send it to France to be administered by Y. M. C. A. secretaries. A Catholic mother had given up

STAR DUST FROM THE DUGOUTS

her vacation to send me twenty dollars for that fund, in spite of the fact that I was a Protestant minister well known to her. Then one day it suddenly occurred to her that she was a Catholic and I was a Protestant and she called me on the phone anxiously inquiring if a part of that money would be used for Catholic boys. Her question dumfounded me for a minute, and I told her the startling truth over the phone.

"Why, my dear woman," I said, "for the first time since I left home to go to France, through six months of Y. M. C. A. work, and back home again, you have made me conscious of the fact that there is a difference. In France as we helped a boy we never knew, and we did not ask, and we did not care, whether a boy was a Catholic or a Protestant. Yes, indeed, a part of this money will certainly go to help Catholic boys in the natural course of events."

Chaplain Lagua, of the French army, said to me on the boat going over: "It is a fact that during the war there has been, even among Catholics, a wonderful movement toward a more spiritual religion and toward a deeper

THE UNION SACRED

brotherhood of religious life. Especially is this true among the chaplains and enlisted priests and pastors. One of our Protestant chaplains was killed recently. At the funeral one of the Roman Catholic chaplains spoke in the cemetery in a most liberal spirit of common brotherhood and Christian love. This would not have been possible before the war. But the war has bound together in common suffering the priests and the Protestant chaplains in a bond of Christian love that church differences cannot separate forever. No churchman of either church ever thought to live to see the day when a Catholic priest would take part in the funeral service of a Protestant minister, and stand with bared head, and tears flooding his cheeks, before the grave of a Huguenot son. It is what we call *Union Sacrée*, the 'Union Sacred.' How it would be possible not to admire these Catholic priests I, a Protestant chaplain, say, is more than I can understand. They go fearlessly into the first-line trenches and often out into No Man's Land in order to take the holy communion and the last rites of death to some of their soldiers dying on

STAR DUST FROM THE DUGOUTS

the field of battle. In fact, the conduct of the priests and of the sisters in the hospitals has made for the respect of all religions in France; and both men and women who never before embraced the comforts of either the Protestant or Catholic Church are turning to their altars with bowed heads and tender hearts."

Chaplain Laugu gave me another thrilling incident.

It was a general gathering of people. The Socialists were there. "What we called in France the freethinkers were there. . . . It was after the war had reduced us all to a common level, politically, socially, and religiously. At the close of a splendid lecture by a friend of mine concerning Jesus Christ, one of these Socialist freethinkers stood up and with great emotion said, 'We are not Catholics; we are not Protestants; we are nothing; but when you speak about Jesus Christ as you have spoken this night, our sole desire is to fall on our faces and worship him.' "

I am not making an argument for a union of the Catholic and the Protestant churches;

THE UNION SACRED

nor am I making an argument for a union of Protestant churches. I am not making an argument for anything. I am simply presenting the facts. Somebody else may make the arguments. I am saying, that whether or no we want it; whether or no we, the preachers and the leaders of the church, take cognizance of it, arguments or no argument, the fact is that the boys in the service have seen such a perfect illustration of, such a workable example of, such a warm, friendly living lesson of church unity that they will look to see in the coming months and years a spirit that is more and more swinging like a huge tide to that crest, never to ebb.

I say that the preacher at home, and the Sunday school teacher, and the mother and the father who are concerned about the spiritual welfare of the boy, whether he has been in America or France, will talk his language of religion if they try to forget sectarian differences, if they cease to emphasize the non-essentials of requirements for church membership; if they will remember that for two solid years that boy has been living in the throbbing,

STAR DUST FROM THE DUGOUTS

vital presence of a great religious brotherhood where church lines and differences have not obtruded themselves; has been living in a laboratory of love where great religious forces have been thrown together in the same crucibles, which act, instead of producing an explosion of opinions and creeds and customs and traditions, has evolved a wonderful mixture of force and power, and love and tears and laughter, and social communion, and sacred moments, and great resolves, and high ideals, and clean living, and far calls to holy and heroic tasks.

They have seen it work. They will not, at first, expect an abrupt severing of church differences. But they will not tolerate preaching in a pulpit that tends to further bitterness, prejudice, hate, and hurt that comes from emphasizing church distinctions.

Do you think that it made any difference to the American officer who was dying in a Paris hospital whether the secretary-preacher was Catholic, Protestant, or Jew?

The call had come to the Y. M. C. A. headquarters in Paris. An American officer was

THE UNION SACRED

dying and wanted to see a preacher. They didn't say whether he was Catholic, Congregationalist, Methodist, or Presbyterian. He just wanted to see a preacher.

A preacher I know went in answer to that call, although he had been informed that the man was dying with smallpox. It was not a pleasant task, for the poor lieutenant's body was practically covered with running sores. He was a loathsome sight. But as this young preacher said to me afterward: "He was an American soldier, dying, and far from home, and I would have crawled on my hands and knees clear across France to have served him; and I would have risked every disease in the world to have carried his message home to his wife and baby! That was a privilege of a man's life time."

"Where am I?" was the first question the poor, sick fellow asked my friend.

"In a Paris hospital sick," was the answer.

"Why, how did I get here? I thought I hadn't left the States yet?" said the young officer, in his delirium.

STAR DUST FROM THE DUGOUTS

"Well, you are in Paris, and you are a very sick man," said the Methodist preacher.

"Am I going to die?" he asked, so abruptly that my friend was taken off his feet.

He hesitated for a moment, considering, before he made answer.

"Yes, my boy."

But his hesitancy gave the officer a chance to go on, even as he was speaking.

"Yes, I'm going to die. I know it. I have known it all along. It is all clear to me now. I was brought in here with a wound. I got it in the back at Verdun. Then I took pneumonia, and that French soldier came in here from another room to be sociable with me. He had smallpox in light form and gave it to me. I wasn't strong enough to throw it off. Yes—I'm—going to—die—in France—thousands of miles—from—home—and——"

Then he wept, and in his delirium he chattered away; but when he came to himself again he finished his sentence just as if nothing had intervened.

"And mother and the kiddie. A thousand

THE UNION SACRED

miles away from home and her. Write her. Tell her that I loved her and the kiddie to my last breath. God bless them both—their old daddy——”

The secretary bowed his head before this tragedy. He took the lieutenant's hand, which was covered with sores. He forgot that, in the poor lad's sorrow, for the officer was nothing but a mere boy, after all.

The soldier looked up and muttered.

“Are you praying? Don't pray for me; pray for her; and the kiddie; poor little top; poor girl; poor little top. They'll be so lonely without their daddy. Pray for *them*. I'm, I'm all right—I've kept clean—I'm all right—not outside much—but inside——”

And suddenly that preacher-secretary's duty was ended.

Boys hear and know of this type of service rendered in the name of the Master; not in the name of the Catholic Church, nor of the Methodist Church, nor of the Presbyterian Church, but in the name of the Eternal God of every human being. Remembering these things, and deeds such as the one I have just mentioned,

STAR DUST FROM THE DUGOUTS

and which I might duplicate a dozen times in this chapter; remembering the great eternal fundamentals of religion, that "Greater love hath no man than this, that he will lay down his life for his friends," they will not be able to understand any emphasis on church differences. And more than that: they will not be able to understand any negative attitude toward church unity on the part of any church or preacher. The day for negations along that line is past. They are a part of the Old Era. The New Era is here!



CHAPTER XII

LINKING THE BOY UP WITH THE CHURCH

THIS is frankly and openly, hopefully and cheerfully, prayerfully and sincerely, hilariously and deliberately a chapter of enticement. It is bait. It is an attempt to set forth that beauty of the flower and scent and color, of warmth and friendship and Christian love which will lure and challenge and call the boy to the high and holy place which we name the church and to such high and holy tasks as will make him feel that the church has some-

STAR DUST FROM THE DUGOUTS

thing to offer him that is as worth while, as full of adventure and danger, and as big as the crusade from which he has just returned.

I do not say that this is the final word on this tremendously important theme. I only know that the burden of the possibilities of that boy who has been overseas is upon my preacher-heart and that I want to help, even though that help be but a little, to point the way.

Many suggestions will be added to the suggestions of this chapter as to how to link the boys up with the church as they come back. Each additional thought will receive a glad shout of welcome from this humble writer's lips. Even since this manuscript was written I have read Dr. Charles Sheldon's new book, "All The World," which deals with this great theme in marvelously dramatic fiction form. I wish every preacher might read that book in connection with this chapter and this theme.

LINKING HIM UP SOCIALLY

The social way must be the bait, the lure. It must be the scent of the flower that calls

LINKING THE BOY WITH THE CHURCH

the hungry bee to that richer thing more worth while to him than even the scent suggests.

Those who know the young man at home or those who knew him in France will say at once that his social nature is strong. It has only been made stronger by his experiences in France, for reasons that are obvious. He has been kept away for months and years from socially mingling with women of his own nation. He is hungry for that woman touch, that clean, woman touch which he has missed so long.

His entire social life since he went to France has been with men. Why, one of the saddest and yet the most hilarious things that I saw in France while I was there was what we called a "stag dance." Each Thursday evening we had a regular dance in which only men were present. Men danced with men. Sailors danced with doughboys, and it was a happy crowd. They always crowded the hut for this social evening. They always encored the numbers, and they always stayed until the lights were out.

STAR DUST FROM THE DUGOUTS

"Men dancing with men?" queried my preacher friend in New York when I told him of this strange social phenomenon in France.

"Yes, men dancing with men! Men dancing with men all evening in a crowded hut to the music of an orchestra, dancing and enjoying it," I replied.

"Impossible!" my friend replied.

"But it happened! It happened each Thursday night for two months that I know of. It happened all over France. It was the most popular night that the Y. M. C. A. secretary put on. That night was sure to bring a packed hut."

But, in spite of the fact that the boys enjoyed their social life without women in France, that very thing has made them hungry for the woman touch. They are coming back home eager for it. The problem of the church is to see that they get this woman touch, and that they get it under decent surroundings and that they get it with clean, fine women. If the church fails here, it has failed in a fundamental answer to one of the two greatest human hungers.

LINKING THE BOY WITH THE CHURCH

So socially we must see that the church supplies that woman touch. This must be done through social life in which the young women of our churches take a definite leadership. They must not spare themselves in time or earnestness in this particular. There is nothing more important than this now that the war is over if the church is in earnest.

In discussing this very question with a group of my more mature women, whom I had called together for advice on how to link the boys up with the church socially, one of the most brilliant of my women, who has a son in France and who has been giving this theme much careful and prayerful thought, arose to speak with great eagerness in her manner. I could see that back of the tears in her eyes there was a great, eager idea. I could see that not only an educated woman's mind had been at work, but that a great, overflowing, hungry mother's heart had added anxiety to that thought.

Her idea was simple and yet it has great possibilities. It was that each church organize a "Soldiers' Club." This club will make

STAR DUST FROM THE DUGOUTS

no distinction between those boys who have seen service in the camps at home and "over there." The boys themselves will not wish this distinction made. They are too big for that; but every mother's son of them will want to talk over their experiences. They will get together somewhere to do this thing. No force on earth can stop them. We might as well recognize that certainty. So the church must provide with all of its might and power and equipment this place and this organization. "The Soldiers' Club" will do this.

It might have a chaperon. That chaperon might be the mother of a soldier, or his sister. The club would be something besides a social gathering. It could be a social club but also a Sunday school class. In this way naturally and carefully the boys in this club, at least those who wished, could be a part of the church school. And if this soldier's class is taught by a live, energetic, forward-looking man, preferably a man who has been in the service or in France in some capacity, it will link that club of boys up with the church in a way that will astonish the church.

LINKING THE BOY WITH THE CHURCH

Another social suggestion that came forth from this meeting was that an evening be arranged; a social evening called "Hut Night." A "Y" hut could easily be constructed in a social hall of the church. Let the women of the church dress in girls' Y. M. C. A. uniforms. Let there be tables and a canteen. Let the evening's refreshments be served over the canteen counter by the girls of the church. Let there be an old phonograph going all the time. As a part of the play of the evening have every boy sit down and write a letter to some girl in the room. Then let there be a regular program of some literary value. Let the boys have a part in this program with stories of "Service Life." Have candles to light the "Hut." It would make a fine social evening.

LINK HIM UP WITH THE SERVICE FLAG

Every preacher who has been worth the salary that is paid him has seen that there was a service flag in his church during the past two years. He has had an Honor Roll and that Roll has been read at least once a

STAR DUST FROM THE DUGOUTS

Sunday. He who has failed here has lost one of his strongest appeals both to the boy in the service and to the folks at home.

I met one boy in France whose name was on the Honor Roll of my church at home. He was not a member of the church, but his mother is. He came running up to me in a certain port of entry one day after I had been there a month and we had had several talks. He was driving a big Pierce-Arrow truck. He left it standing in the middle of a narrow French road, blocking traffic. He was waving in his hand a piece of paper. I thought that it was a letter from his sweetheart at least, and waited with a smile.

He was a big, rugged, rough boy. Much to my surprise, he had a Church Weekly Bulletin. Tears were in his eyes as well as happiness.

"What do you think of this, Doc? They got my name on the church Honor Roll! Say, that's fine of them! I don't even belong, but mother does."

Then he paused as his dirty thumb found his name to point it out to me.

LINKING THE BOY WITH THE CHURCH

"Do they care that much in the church about us guys?" he asked me.

"They care more than you know," I replied.

"Say, that's great! That's great!" he kept saying to me as he looked at that Honor Roll.

A month later I caught this same rascal showing that dirty soiled worn Bulletin to a new man who had just landed in France. The two of them stood down by the docks where a big transport had just landed. Much to my surprise, I saw the other lad pull out a Church Bulletin and match my own friend's enthusiasm with a showing of his own name on an Honor Roll.

Yes, this gets a strangle hold on the boys' hearts. Few preachers have failed to have this Honor Roll. / X

A little five-year-old lad's father, one of my doctors, enlisted in the service. The first Sunday morning young Philip listened to hear his father's name read on the Honor Roll, but for some reason it was omitted. The next Sunday, small as he was, he got a copy of the Church Bulletin the first minute that he entered the church and ran his stubby

STAR DUST FROM THE DUGOUTS

finger down the list of two hundred names to see if his daddy's name was there. He could recognize the name "Jordan" when he saw it. It was not there, and he cried. When the preacher heard of this incident it made him know just what a place in the hearts of folks the Honor Roll and service flag have, so the next Sunday that boy's daddy's name was on the roll.

But the daddy had been called to camp. So had Philip. Then the next thing the preacher heard was that Phillip had contracted the influenza, and for a week his life was despaired of. Unconscious through pneumonia for two days of that week, Philip's first waking thought was as to whether or not his daddy's name was on the Honor Roll and if a star had been placed on the church flag for him.

The service flag will always be a sacred thing to the boys. They know all that it means. They have heard how each Sunday "God save our Noble Sons" has been sung for them; and a prayer lifted from the altars of the church. This has impressed them, church members or no.

LINKING THE BOY WITH THE CHURCH

Now comes this suggestion from a thoughtful layman of my own church, following a request from his pastor for suggestions as to how to link the boys up with the church. It is that as each boy comes home we have a little service at the altars of the church. This lad is to be invited to the altar by the preacher. The star that represented him is to be taken from the service flag and pinned on his breast. It is his to keep forever.

This suggestion came to me with a thrill. Its possibilities are infinite. It will link that boy up with the church as nothing else that I know.

"What shall be done with the gold stars?" my friend asked me.

My reply comes quickly. "Each mother who has given a son in death to his country shall also be called to the altars of the church and there, in honor and tribute, that gold star shall be pinned on her breast."

LINKING HIM UP TO A GREAT TASK

That must be the aim of the church. That lad has learned application in the service.

STAR DUST FROM THE DUGOUTS

He went to France on wings of love as a great idealist on the crusade of service. The church must give him a task either at home or abroad with the same possibilities of adventure, the same dangers, the same sacrifices, the same great ends if it expects to win him.

We have the answer. We have the answer at home and we have it across the seas. The regeneration of industry; the solution of the social and economic problems in factories and mills, a living wage, decent living conditions, the right to live, the right to labor, fair working hours; democracy in industry instead of autocracy in industry; "to make the world safe for children"—all these great tasks the church must offer the boy, for pink teas and church bazaars will not satisfy the hunger in his heart for a man's job.

Then there is the mission field. It is "over-seas" work. It is full of dangers; Africa, Japan, Mexico, South America, China, Korea, the islands of the seas; those same islands that lured Robert Louis Stevenson, he of the adventurer's heart—all these are full of appeal to the venturing heart.

LINKING THE BOY WITH THE CHURCH

He will feel the lure of travel. He will feel the pull of adventure. The greatest adventure, the greatest life adventure that the church can offer a live idealist who has been in France is mission work.

He has known what it means to risk his life; to tramp over long trails through rain and mud; and he has known sickness. Africa offers that same great thrill in its unopened mission fields.

He had dedicated himself to the fight for democracy and brotherhood on earth. Every missionary that goes forth to work goes with the same spirit, with the same hope, with the same end in view as the soldier who went to France. Missionaries are being sent to China to make the "world safe for democracy."

No wonder that Yuan Shi Kai accused the Christians of bringing about the republic in China. "You cannot teach that all men are equal; that all men are brothers without overthrowing autocracy and bringing about democracy," this astute Oriental said.

Hundreds of thoughtful, educated boys who have been in France will find the appeal of

STAR DUST FROM THE DUGOUTS

the mission field thrilling their very souls; and it will send them out again on a great crusade of service, to fight for the principles for which Jesus the Christ died, to "make the world safe for democracy" if the church puts this great task, this great challenge to a man's soul up to them in the manner that it deserves. This, a tremendous task, will do more to link the boys up with the church than anything else on earth.

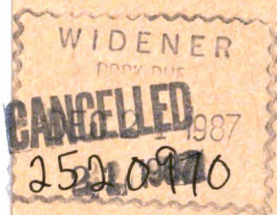
This book should be returned to
the Library on or before the last date
stamped below.

A fine of five cents a day is incurred
by retaining it beyond the specified
time.

Please return promptly.

DUE APR 11 '35

DUE MAR 19 '37



H 807.719.5

Star dust from the dugouts :

Widener Library

006678947



3 2044 088 002 233